

A
GODLY AND LEARNED
Exposition or Commenta-
rie vpon the three first Chapters of
the Reuelation.

PREACHED IN CAMBRIDGE BY
that reuerend and judicious Diuine, Maister WILLIAM
PERKINS, Ann. Dom. 1595. First published for the benefit of Gods
Church, by ROBERT HILL, Bachelor of Diuinitie.

The third Edition reuised, and enlarged after a more per-
fect copie, at the request of M. PERKINS Executors, by THOMAS
PIERSON, Preacher of Gods word.

Herunto is prefixed an Analysis of the Vision in these three Chapters: And
a twofold Table added; one of places of Scripture: the other of speciall
points to bee obserued.

PROV. 13. 9. and PROV. 4. 18.

*The light of the righteous reioycest by encrease, shining more and more vnto the perfect
day: But the candle of the wicked shall be put out.*



LONDON,
Printed by Adam Ifflip for Cutbbert Burbie, and are to
bee sold at his shop in Paules Churchyard at the signe
of the Swan. 1607.

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PREACHED IN CAMBRIDGE BY
 that excellent and judicious Divine, Minister WILLIAM
 Perkins, A.M. D. 1629. First published by the benevolence of God's
 Church by R. I. at H. R. in 1629.

The third Edition revised, and enlarged almost more per-
 fect copies of the reprint of 1629, by J. H. W. S.
 57...429

Heretofore is printed an Analysis of the Vision in these three Chapters, and
 a whole Table added, containing the several Chapters of the Revelation.

Printed by J. H. W. S. at H. R. in 1629.



LONDON
 Printed by Adam Ship for Christopher Biddle, and are to
 be sold at his Shop in Pauls Church-yard, at the signe
 of the Swan. 1629.



TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFULL AND VERTVOVS

Ladie, the Ladie ELIZABETH MOVNTAGV
of Hemington in Northamptonshire,
Grace and Peace.

IVST cause there was (Right Worshipfull) as well in respect of the reuerend Author, whose rest is now in glorie; as also of the godly Reader, whose good herein claimes speciall strokes that some refining hand should recommend vnto the Church of God, a more perfect coppie of this godly Exposition, than the first Edition hereof did afford: and yet no cause I find, why your worshie Children, who no doubt for the Authors sake, did more gratefully accept the former dedication, should by me be deprived of their right: Nay rather, as they in heart (I am perswaded) did highly honour the Author, for his double labour in Christs vineyard; so do I reioyce, this recompence is returned for their loue, That wish this worke, their memorie with posteritie shall long endure. And sith my paines herein yeelds me this right, to make choice of some, to whom I also may commend the patronage hereof; I presume to present the same vnto your Ladiship. If this bee any kinnesse on my behalfe, I confesse it is farre short of your desert, and of my desire: some others (I know) may challenge me herein, as unmindfull of their loue; yet because God may offer me opportunitie hereafter, to giue them good content this way, I will intreat their patience for this time, that I may ioine the Mother with the Children, in this worke of loue, to afford aduision to these godly labours of the dead. It fitts you best (good Madam) in many respects; for neither will your Children complaine of your admission into the societie of their right, nor you esteeme the lesse hereof, because of their claime hereto by former possession. They are your owne, and you theirs; this comes vnto you all, as vnto one, accounting your vnited loue far greater safetie: and looke what grace it finds by your protection, like grace it yeelds by many a good instruction. Salomon saith,^a Good vnderstanding maketh acceptable (meaning to such as feare God, for^b fooles hate knowledge) how welcome then will this be vnto you, who^c haue said vnto Wisedome, thou art my sister, and do esteeme the words of her mouth,^d The ioy and reioycing of your heart; sith herein you shall find on euery leafe, some pleasant fruit of the tree of life: a tast whereof I will here set before you, that you may iudge the better of the store. When the Disciples harts were full of greefe for Christs departure then at hand, Philip said vnto him, in the name of all,^e Shew vs the father and it sufficeth. Loe^f here, behold and you shall see, wor the

A ij.

father

^a Prou. 13. 15.

^b Prou. 1. 22.

^c Prou. 7. 4.

^d Ier. 15. 16.

^e Ioh. 14. 8.

^f Chap. 1. ver. 4.

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

2. Verſ. 5.
 3. Joh. 17. 3.
 6. Mat. 28. 20.
 3. Verſ. 13.
 2. Pſal. 16. 8.
 4. Ier. 20. 11.
 1. Cor. 2. 4.
 1. Tim. 2. 7.
 2. Heb. 6. 10.
 6. Rom. 15. 13.
 1. Joh. 4.
 2. Cor. 9. 8.
 1. Philp. 1. 11.

father alone, but with the father, the Spirit of grace; and with them both the ^a Son of God, ſo lively deſcribed to your view, that you may truly ſay of this knowledge (God ſanctifying the ſame vnto your Soule) ^a It is eternall life. When Chriſt would harden his Diſciples for the great worke of their miniſterie, hee doth it by the promiſe of his preſence, ſaying, ^b Behold, I am with you alway. The euidence and fruit whereof, you ſhall hereby ſo well perceiue, that hereupon I truſt, both you and many moe, will learne to ſay with Dauid in temptation, ^c I haue ſet the Lord before me alway; for he is at my right hand, therefore I ſhall not ſlide: And with Ieremie in affliction, ^d The Lord is with me like a mightie Gyant, therefore my perfecutors ſhall be oüerthrowne, and ſhall not preuaile. What ſhall I ſay more? It would be too long to ſpeake of the dignitie of Chriſts Church and miniſterie here handled at large: and to inſtance in particulars through the ſeuene Epistles to theſe ſeuene Churches of Aſia: exely this, in the Preface of each Epistle, learne what Chriſt is in himſelfe, and ^e his Church; In the Matter, behold the ſtate of euery Church, and ſee what Chriſt approueth, and what his ſoule deſereth; In the Concluſion, ſee his bountie towards his children, and the durie of all to him againe. The handling of theſe things will much delight your Chriſtian hearts: for beſide the ^e Plaine euidence of the Spirit, in opening the text, which is beſt pleaſing vnto God, and moſt profitable to his Church (wherein this godly Author had a ſpeciall grace) the application is ſo fit and pertinent to our times, that I had welnigh ſaid, He did foreſee what we now behold; and haſt foretold, what we for our luke-warmeneſſe, and decay in loue, may iuſtly feare: ^f Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord giue you vnderſtanding in all things. Hold faſt that which you haue, be faithfull vnto deaſh, and the Lord will giue you the crowne of life, ^g For God is not vnrighteous, that he ſhould forget your workes and labour of loue, which you haue ſhewed towards his name, in that you haue miniſtered vnto the Saints, and yet do miniſter: Now the God of hope, ^h fill you with all ioy and peace in beleeuing, and increaſe your ioy by the conſtant ⁱ walking of your children in the truth: Yea the ſame Lord, ^k make all grace ſo to abound towards you all, that alwaies hauing all ſufficiencie in all things, you may abound in euery good worke, ^l which is by Ieſus Chriſt vnto the praiſe and glorie of God; vnto whoſe gracious proteccion both now and euer, I humbly commend your Ladyſhip, with your godly familie.

London, December 10.

1606.

Your Ladyſhips to commaund,

Thomas Pierſon.



TO THE RIGHT^r WORSHIPFVL

Sir Edward Mountagu, Sir Walter Mountagu,
Sir Henry Mountagu, and Sir Charles Mountagu, Knights, M.
James Mountagu, Doctor of Divinitie, Deane of his Maiesties Chappell, and M. Sid-
ney Mountagu Esquire, the Ladie Susan Sandys, and the Ladie Theodosia Capell,
children of that right worthie and religious Sir Edward Mountagu of
Bowthron in the Countie of North-hampton Knights, and of the
Ladie Elizabeth his worthie Wife, Sister to the right Ho-
norable Sir Iohn Harington, Baron of Exton,
and father to the veruious Ladie the
Counesse of Bedford, Grace
and Peace.



Ight Worshipfull, as the Patriarch *Jacob* had ^a twelue sonnes, so Christ the *Messiah* had ^b twelue Disciples: but as *Ioseph* was beloued about ^c all those sonnes: so *Iohn* was beloued about ^d all the disciples. *Ioseph* was apparelled better than the rest, and *Iohn* was inspired far better than the rest. * Had it not been for *Ioseph* Egypt had wanted her food temporall, and had it not been for *Iohn*, the Church had wanted her food eternall. ^e The future state of Egypt was reuealed to *Ioseph*, and the future state of the Church was reuealed to *Iohn*. The one was ^f exiled, because his father loued him; and the other exiled, because his maister loued him. The place of his exile was into the ^g Island of Pathmos, being before by *Traian* put into a vessell of ^h scalding oyle. But that God who shewed his visions to ⁱ *Abraham* in the mount, ^j to *Jacob* in the field, ^k to *Ioseph* in the stocks, ^l to *Moses* in Midian, ^m to *Jeremie* in the prison, ⁿ to *Daniel* in Babylon, ^o and to the Apostle *Peter* in the house of a Tanner, euen he sheweth his visions to *Iohn* in his exile.

He is not bound to persons, he can aduance whom he list, he is not bound to place, he can reueale where hee list. For persons, hee can preferre ^p *Abel* before *Cain*, ^q *Jacob* before *Esau*, ^r *Dauid* before *Eliab*, ^s *Matthias* before *Iudas*. He can make ^t *Moses* a Courtier, ^u *Iob* a Potentate, ^v *Samuel* a Iudge, ^w *Dauid* a King, ^x *Salomon* a Soueraigne, ^y *Elysha* a plowman, ^z *Amos* a Neat-heard, ^{aa} *Jeremie* a Priest, ^{ab} *Daniel* a Prince, ^{ac} *Isaiah* of the bloud Royall, ^{ad} *Matthew* a Publicane, ^{ae} *Peter* a Fisher, ^{af} and *Paule* a Tent-maker, to be penners and preachers of the word of God. For place, as no time can prescribe against the King of a nation, so no place can prescribe against this King of all nations. ^{ag} *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the Spirit worketh where it listeth.*

^a Gen. 42. 13.
^b Mat. 10. 1.
^c Gen. 37. 3.
^d Ioh. 31.
^e Gen. 41. 38.
^f Gen. 41. 35.
^g Gen. 37. 4.
^h Reuel. 1. 9.
ⁱ Esdras. 1. 1.
^j Gen. 22. 12.
^k Gen. 28.
^l Gen. 40.
^m Exod. 3.
ⁿ Ier. 38. 14.
^o Dan. 2.
^p Act. 10.
^q Gen. 4.
^r Mal. 1.
^s 1. Sam. 16.
^t Act. 1.
^u Exod. 2. 10.
^v Iob. 1. 1.
^w Act. 7.
^x 2. Sam. 2. 1.
^y Prou. 1. 1.
^z 1. Kin. 19. 19.
^{aa} Amos 1. 1.
^{ab} Ierem. 1. 1.
^{ac} Dan. 1. 6.
^{ad} Ilay 1. 1.
^{ae} Math. 9. 9.
^{af} Math. 4. 18.
^{ag} Act. 18. 2.
^{ah} Nullum tempus
occurrit Regi.
^{ai} Iohn 5.

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^a 1 Reu. cap. 1. 5.
^b Ver. 8.
^c Ver. 18.
^d Ver. 16.
^e Ver. 14.
^f Ver. 15.
^g Chap. 3. 1.
^h Chap. 3. 4.
ⁱ Ver. 7.
^k Ver. 14.
^l Dan. 2. 22.

^m Gen. 29.
ⁿ Exod. 3.
^o Gen. 3.
^p Acts 9.

Johns Gospel.
Johns Revelation.

^q Amos 3. 7.

*The contents of
the whole Reuelation.*

^r *The Church of Rome.*
^s *The Romans Empire.*
^t *The diuill.*

^u Num. 13.

^v Gen. 3.
^w Revel. 1. 3.
^x Revel. 1. 1.
^y Gen. 20.
^z 1 Sam. 9. 9.
¹ 2 Pet. 1. 13.
² Isa. 58. 1.
³ Ez. 3. 1.
⁴ Cor. 3.
⁵ Luk. 12. 24.
⁶ Prou. 9. 4.
⁷ Erec. 47.
⁸ Math. 23. 24.
⁹ 1 Pet. 5. 1.
¹⁰ Mar. 9. 50.
¹¹ Dan. 12. 3.
¹² 1 Cor. 11. 10.
¹³ Eccl. 34. 3.

It pleased Christ, who is called in this Reuelation, ^a that faithfull witnesse, that first begotten of the dead, ^b that Prince of the kings of the earth, ^c Alpha and Omega, the first and last, ^d he that hath the keyes of Hell, and of death, ^e which hath that sharpe sword, ^f his eyes like fire, ^g his feete like brasse, ^h the seuen Spiritts of God, the seuen Starres in his hand, ⁱ the key of David, who is called here ^k Amen, the beginning of the creatures of God; and in Daniel, hee that ^l reueleth secrets, it pleased this Christ to reueale secrets to John. Not by dreame as to ^m Iacob, or apparition, as to ⁿ Moses, or by voice, as to ^o Adam; but partly by vision, and partly by voice, as he did when he turned ^p Saul into Paul. This John was *Legatus à Latere*: that embassadour who leaned on his Lords brest. He writeth Christs historie, there he sheweth his loue to Christ: hee writeth the Churches historie, there Christ sheweth his loue to him: especially in this, that he will doe nothing, which he doth not reueale to his ^q seruants this Prophet. For the Church in his time, wee may see how it stood, in the three first Chapters: and what condition it should haue for the time to come, it is plainly set downe in the rest of this booke. If we respect the generall estate of the Church, after John had described the Authors of this Reuelation, which are God the Father, chap. 4. and Christ his Sonne, chap. 5. hee commeth to the workes of God, which are predictions, chap. 6. obsignations, chap. 7. indignations, chap. 8. 9. Predictions of things to come, obsignations of such as must be saued, and indignation on things to be destroyed. And for the more particular estate of the Church, hauing (chap. 10.) shewed his warrant to write, he commeth to her actions: first, in her Prophets: secondly, in her bodie. In her Prophets, their fighting, falling, rising, chap. 11. In her bodie, comparing her to a woman clothed with the Sunne, chap. 12. and describing her by her combats, conquests, triumphs: her combats defensiuē, chap. 13. and offensiuē in Christ, by words, chap. 14. threatnings, chap. 15. and iudgements, chap. 16. her victories gotten against that ^r whore, chap. 17. and 18. the ^s Beast, chap. 19. and the ^t Dragon, chap. 20. And all that glorie which shee shall haue in the kingdome of God, is vnder the type of Ierusalem most comfortably set downe, chap. 21. 22.

The things in this Booke were (I grant) verie darke to them that liued in the dayes of John, as the Prophecie of Daniel was to them who liued in the time of Daniel. But as that Prophecie being fulfilled, wee can now tell what was foretold in it: so many things being fulfilled which were foretold in this booke, we may easily see what is meant by it: and the posteritie to come shall better vnderstand this booke than wee doe, because it may bee all things are not yet fulfilled. Neither is this booke like the cities of the ^u Anakims, or the ^v tree of knowledge which may not be reached to: for ^w blessed is he that readeth the words of this booke. But to come to these three Chapters written by John surnamed the Diuine, and expounded by one a most worthie Diuine. The first Chapter is a Proeme or Preface to the booke: the two latter are Epistles dedicating this booke. The dedication is made to ^x seuen seuerall Churches, and by name to the Ministers which are called ^y Angels. In the word of God, Ministers haue many excellent titles giuen them. (though now they are scarcely graced with titles) they are called ^z Prophets, ¹ Seers, ² Remembrancers, ³ Trumpeters, ⁴ Washmen, ⁵ Husbandmen, ⁶ Stewards, ⁷ Maydens, ⁸ Fishers, ⁹ Leaders, ¹⁰ Elders, ¹¹ Sals, ¹² Starres, ¹³ Angels, and ¹⁴ Shepheards. Prophets to teach, Seers to foretell, Remembrancers to put in mind, Trumpeters

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to found; *Watchmen* to admonish, *Husbandmen* to plow vp, *Stewards* to distribute, *Maidens* to keepe pure the doctrine of truth, *Fishers* to catch men, *Elders* to goe before, *Elders* to gouerne, *Salt* to season, *Starres* to giue light, *Angels* to declare, and *Shepheards* to feed: to feed (I say) soundly by doctrine, liberally by charitie, and religiously by life. By doctrine: for *Sacerdos sine doctrina, est nauis sine uelis*; a Priest without knowledge, is a ship without saile. By liberalitie: for *Nihil habet homo adeo diuinum quam benefacere*, ^{a Nihil in ora de paup.} Man is in nothing more like God, than in doing good. By life: *cuius uita despicitur, eius oratio contemnitur*: his words are not esteemed, whose life is not approoued. And that it may be said of them as it was of *Origen*: *Quale habuit uerbum, talem habuit uitam*: as his words were, so were his workes. They must not be barren like mount ^b *Gilboah*, but ^c weaned as *Samuel* was, ^{b 2. Sam. 1. 27. c 1. Sam. 1. 24.} before they be offered vnto the Lord. They must be pure water if they will cleanse others, and more than whetstones, if they will sharpen others. They must bee in ^d integrity *Abrahams*, ^e in meekenesse *Moses*, ^f in knowledge *Aarons*, ^g in paines *Pauls*, ^h and in praying *Samuels*: and remember, that as *Augustine* sayd, *Manus pauperum sunt gazophylacium Christi*, The hands of the poore are the treasure of Christ. I need not speake much of the dutie of a Minister: for euery one will teach him his dutie, that will not bee ranged within any dutie himselte.

These Churches were then like ⁱ *Dauids* Worthies, excellent aboue all ^{i 1. Chr. 12. 14.} the Churches of the world: but because they lost their first ^k loue, ^l were not faithfull to the death, ^m maintained the doctrine of *Balaam*, ⁿ suffered women to teach, ^o bare a name onely to liue, ^p had but a little strength, ^q were neither hore nor cold, and ^r repented not as they should haue done, of all their sinnes, they are reprehended by *Iohn*, threatened by Christ, and the Candlestick of the Gospel is now taken away from them. *Iam seges est ubi Troia fuit*: Now *Mahomet* rageth, where *Messiah* did raigne. Are they reprehended? let vs hearken: are they threatened? let vs feare: are they fallen? let vs labour to continue. From *Iohns* reprehension we see, that (as one said) *hereof our Elders haue complained, hereof doe we complaine, and hereof they which liue after vs will complaine, that men waxe worse*, and liue not according to the doctrine of Gods word. From Christs threatning we see, that God is mercifull, ^s who first offereth peace before he fight against vs, that we being forewarned, might be forearmed. And by the wofull downefall of these seuen Churches, let vs that stand take heed that we fall not: for if God spared not the ^t old world who despised *Noah*, the *Sodomites* who vexed *Lot*, ^u *Ierusalem* which abused the Prophets, ^x *Colossa*, *Hierapolis*, and *Laodicea*, who reiected *Paule*, and these Asian Churches, who did not grow in righteousnesse as they did in riches, how shall wee escape ^y if we neglect so great saluation? and for this cause these Sermons are most worthie to be considered of in this present age. O then let vs now ^z consider this season: ^a redeeme the opportunitie, ^b not harden our hearts, but regard the time of our present visitation. As the day openeth and shutteth with the Sunne, so saluation openeth and shutteth with the Gospell, ^c whilest it is called to day, let vs heare his voice: ^d He that laboureth in Summer is the sonne of wisdom; but he that sleepeth in haruest is the sonne of confusion. ^e

All things in the world doe take their time, the bird to build her neast, the husbandman to sow his seed, the mariner to goe to sea, the gardener to set his trees, the sicke patient to take phyicke, the cooke to season meats, and the dresser of the vineyard to gather his fruit. It will bee too late to build in Summer, to sow

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sow in haruest, to go to sea when the ship is launched, to transplant trees when they are old, to take phylicke when we are dying, to season meates when they are vnseasoned, and when winter is come to gather fruit. The ^a five foolish virgines came too late, *Diues* ^b in hell repenteth too late, the time present is onely ours. Is the figge tree fruitlesse? it shall heare that sentence, ^c *Neuer fruit grow on thee any more.* ^d *Get thee then righteousness before thou come to iudgement: use Physicke before thou be sicke, and whilst thou maiest yet sinne, shew thy conuersion,* as the wise man exhorteth euery man. But alas, whereunto shall I liken this generation? We are like the *Ephesians*, wee haue ^e lost our first loue; or the *Laodiceans*, we are ^f neither hote nor cold: or the *twilights*, neither day nor night: or the *Autumne*, neither faire nor foule: or one sicke of an ague, one day well, an other ill: or a man in a *Lethargie*, neither alieue nor dead: or *Hermaphroditus*, neither male nor female: or to those creatures called *Auguins*, which liue in water or on land: or the *Lionesse*, which the oftener shee breedeth, the fewer cubs she beareth: or the *Mariner*, who is only good in a storme: or the *Marigold*, that shutteth and openeth with the Sunne: or the *Mermaydes*, which are halfe flesh, halfe fish. I would to God wee were either hote or cold: that as the hottest regions bring forth sweetest spices, so most zealous people might be most fruitfull in good workes: that as the Sunne in the heauen is swiftest at her setting, so the sonnes of God might bee best at their ending. But is it so? no: the more we are taught, the more ignorant are many, and the older we are, the colder in Religion. We haue indeed many of vs, as it was said of *Aristopison*, *Marsem*, or rather *religionem in lingua*, religion in tongue: but when triall is made of vs, euery ^g *Phocian* can espie our halting: and then with ^h *Archilocus* we thinke it better *clypeum abicere quam inserrere*, euen to cast off all religion, than to vndergoe the least disgrace for religion.

The *Moone* desiring to be apparelled as the rest of the Planets, answer was made her, That her diuerse chaunges could admit no kind of habite: and we desiring to be attired with the robes of Christians, it is to be feared, that since we tread ^k *not the Moon vnder our feet*, wee shall neuer be clothed as the church was, with the ^l *Sunne*. ^m *Who is wise, and he shall vnderstand these things; and prudent, and he shall know them.* Let vs therefore labor to ⁿ *grow in grace*, to abound in knowledge, to be full of good workes, and to ouercome all the vnderminers of our future saluation. Then shall we ^o *eat of the tree of life*, not be hurt of the *second death*, *tast of the hidden Manna*, haue power ouer nations, bee clothed in *whise*, made pillars in Gods temple, and sit with *Christ Iesus* in the throne of his father. And though the ^p *sonne of Ishai* cannot make vs Captaines of thousands, yet that *Sonne of Dauid* will ^q *make vs the sonnes of God*. That we may doe so, we must beleue the *Gospell*, put on *Christ Iesus*, and bee renewed by repentances: The first is necessarie, the second comely, the third profitable. To come to the first; it is necessarie we should beleue: for he that ^r *beleueth not*, is condemned already, he is condemned in the counsell of God, in the ministry of the word, and in his owne conscience, & he shal be condemned in the day of iudgement; for ^s *the wrath of God abideth vpon him*. The more I consider the fruits of faith, the more I see the necessitie of faith. ^t *Through it we are saued*: ^u *by it we are iustified*: ^v *in it we liue*. We are saued from *Sathan*, iustified before God, & liue in the Church. In the Church? nay, by it we liue in heauen: for ^w *hee shal beleue in the Sonne of God*, hath *euermore life*. Faith is that which ^x *purifieth the heart*, maketh the whole man to ^y *run the wayes of Gods commandments*,

^a *gineeth*

a Mat. 25. 10.
 b Luk. 16.
 c Luk. 13.
 d *Solum tempus praesens est nostrum. Seneca.*
 e Eccl. 18. 18.

f Apoc. 3.
 g Apoc. 3.

h *Plutarchus in Phocian.*
 i *Treatise of Phocian lib. 5. cap. 30.*

j *Treatise of Apoc. lib. 5. cap. 30.*

k Apoc. 12. 1.
 l *That is all earthly vanities.*
 m Apoc. 12. 1.
 n *That is Christ the Sonne of righteousness.*
 o Hof. 14. 10.
 p 2. Pet. 1. 19.
 q See Rev. 2. 13.

r 1. Sam. 23. 7.
 s Gal. 3. 27.

t Joh. 3. 18.

u Joh. 3. 18.
 v Eph. 2. 8.
 w Rom. 5. 1.

x Heb. 2. 4.
 y Joh. 3. 16.

z A. 15. 9.
 a Phil. 1. 19.

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^a giueth entrance to grace, ^b accesse to God in prayer, ^c made the Elders well reported of, and each Christian to ^d stand to the profession of Christ. It is that ^e hand by which wee must apprehend Christ: that ^f shield by which wee resist all the fierie darts of the Deuill: and that ^g meanes by which we do good to others. ^h By faith we receiue the spirit: ⁱ are members of Christ: ^k we are risen with him: ^l he dwelleth in our hearts: ^m we feed on him continually: ⁿ resist Sathan: ^o are the children of God: ^p and the word which we heare becommeth profitable. And what shall I say? faith is of such a qualitie, that it ^q vnisheth vs to Christ, ^r maketh vs certaine of our saluation, ^s bold in our profession, ministreth ^t true ioy, ^u giueth temporall blessings, ^v sanctifieth our gifts, and maketh vs refuse the ^x pleasures of this present world. In a word, no sinne can condemne him who hath this true faith, and no vertue can saue him who wanteth it.

To come to the second, which is Christ, the object of faith. The most comely garment that euer we can weare, it is to be couered with the ^y robes of Christs righteousnesse, ^z Iacob was blessed by *Esaus* garments; and we are blessed by Christs garments. What wee see through a greene glasse, seemeth all to be greene: and what God seeth through Christ, it is all amiable. We must put on this apparell, not as the Church in the Canticles: ^a *I haue put off my clothes, how shall I put them on againe?* or as a gowne, that wee cast off when we come to our home: but we must so put him on, that we neuer put him off againe. We must put him on by imputation, imitation, infusion, and profession: by *imputation* of his righteousnesse, *imitation* of his vertues, *infusion* of his spirit, and *profession* of his name. Thus we must labour to get Christ: for what though a man could command the earth with *Alexander*, the ^b sea with *Moses*, the ^c fire with *Eliab*, and the ^d Sunne with *Iosuah*? What though he were as rich as ^e *Salomon*, as wise as ^f *Achitophel*, as strong as ^g *Sampson*, as swift as ^h *Ahimaaz*, as beautifull as ⁱ *Absolon*, as fortunate as ^k *Merellus*, and descended as ^l *Paul* was of the blood royall of Princes, yet hauing not Christ, hee hath nothing. Yea, say a man had the abstinence of *Aristydes*, the innocencie of *Phocion*, the holynesse of *Socrates*, the almes deedes of *Cimon*, the moderation of *Camilus*, the honestie, iustice, and faithfulnessse of both *Catoes*, all these out of Christ, were but ^m *splendida peccata*, and to be esteemed as ⁿ dung, in regard of Christ. For haue him, and haue all things, want him and want all things: he is in, at, and after death *aduantage*. I come to the last, it is profitable to repent: for if we ^o turne to the Lord, he will turne to vs: and that we may turne, consider his ^p mercies in forgiuing, his ^q benefits in giuing, his ^r patience in forbearing, and his ^s iudgements in punishing: ^t The word preached, ^u sinnes committed, and that ^v few shall be saued: ^x the shortnesse of life, ^y the vncertainie of life, ^z and the certaintie of death: ^a the ioyes of Heauen, ^b the tormentes of Hell, the ^c comfort of the elect, and that else wee can haue no ^d comfort in death: ^e pray we cannot, vnlesse wee repent, and ^f perish wee shall vnlesse we repent: but blessed shall we bee if we do repent. But *manum de rabula, Magister adest*: this discourse following will teach vs these things: and it am I bold to present to your Worships. *John* sent his Reuelation to many Churches; and I present his Epistles to many worthie personages: and to whom may I better present them than to you. *John* was a Disciple full of loue, and you are brethren full of loue. The Preacher of these *Lectures* was well knowne to manie, but to none better than to many of you, especially to those who were in my time worthie members of that most worthie ^g *Colledge* with him. And the rather I do it, that times to come may reioyce in the Lord,

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Lord, that from one honourable roote haue issued so manie profitable branches to the Churches. You are six brethren as pillars of your house, there were three sisters as fruitfull vines of the same: one is not, but is with the Lord, and her I knew a Ladie of admirable vertues: the other two are, and long may they be so. You are al brethren by *nature* of one venter, *nation* of one country, *grace* of one spirit, *affection* of one heart, *fortune* in great fauor, and of one hope by your holy behauiour. And ^a concerning brotherly loue, I need not to write vnto you: *for you are taught of God to loue one another*. Your ^b *Scilurus* at his death need not to teach you concord, by giuing to each of you a sheafe of arrowes, which cannot well bee broken whilst they are conioyned: for you by your amitie make your selues inuincible. If ^c *Chilo* the Lacedemonian died for ioy to see one sonne crowned at *Olympus*, and ^d *Diagoras Rhodius* did the like, when his three children got the garland at a wrestling: and ^e *Jacob* so reioyced to heare of his sonne *Ioseph*, to bee aduanced greatly in the kingdome of *Egypt*: how might that happie father of yours reioyce, to see at one time, one sonne sitting as *high Sheriffe* of the shire, another *preaching* before the Iudges of Assize, and the third *pleading* as Councillor at the barre, and all the rest of great expectation in the kingdome? Thus ^f *wise sonnes are a ioy to their parents*, and all may ^g behold *how good and comely a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in vnitie*. *Aristotle* could say, that parents were not blessed, vnlesse they were after their death blessed in their children. And surely it is no small part of a fathers blessednesse, to see his children like to flourish when he is gone. Nay of all monuments that parents can leaue behind them, there is none (as one saith) like to a vertuous sonne. But all parents are not to be blessed. ^h *Adams* two sonnes could not agree in one field, ⁱ *Abrahams* in one house, ^k *Isacks* in one wombe, ^l *Dauids* in one pallace, nor ^m *two brethren* in the diuision of an inheritance. And though concord amongst brethren (especially such as diuide the inheritance) be very rare, yet do you, euen in this, most comfortably agree. You are not as *Simeon & Levi*, *Romulus* and *Remus*, *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, *Asreus* & *Thyestes*, *Aeta* and *Perseus*: but as *Cassor* and *Pollux*, *David* and *Jonathan*, *Ioseph* and *Beniamin*; and (as a true friend is described to be) ⁿ *one soule in two bodies*. It seemeth that as *Agrippa* the brother of *Augustus* was beholding to *Salust* for that one sentence, *Small things increase by concord, but perish through discord*: so you haue all learned the same lesson, as being perswaded, that as the members of a body being once dismembred, they cannot possibly be ioined againe: so if naturall brethren be once vnnaturally disioyned, no glue will conioyne them fast againe. It were infinit to shew examples of brotherly loue and hatred, ^o and others haue eased me of this paines. Now that good God, who hath brought you from one roote, placed you in one country, aduanced you to like credit, and giuen you one heart, giue you also one inheritance in the kingdome of heauen. Thus right worshipfull, I am bold to speake vnto you, and the world knoweth I speake the truth, and the Lord knoweth I desire not to flatter. Go on therefore I beseech you, continue in loue, bee settled in the truth, and labour to honour him who thus honoreth you. Be not carried away with the ^p shew of this world, but thinke religion the best nobilitie, and that as ^q *Prudentius* sayd:

*Generosa Christi secta nobilitat viros,
Cui quisquis seruit, ille verè est nobilis.
He noble is that comes of Christ his race:
Who serues this Lord, he surely is not base.*

And

*Quidam nati
sunt apertis
Mentibus.
The Lady VVray.*

^a 1. The. 4. 9.

^b Which had
eightie sonnes.
Plutarch.

^c Theatrum
Philos. pag. 274.
^d Ant. Gch.
lib. 3. Nat. At.
^e Gen. 45. 28.

^f Pro. 10. 1.

^g Plal. 133. 1.
Lib. 10. Eth.

^h Genes. 4.

ⁱ Gen. 31. 9.

^k Gen. 35.

Fraternitas gratia

varum.

^l 2. Kin. 1.

^m Luk. 12. 13.

n *Quidam sunt qui
sunt in duobus
corporibus.*

^o See French
Academ. pag.
342. &c.

^p *Industria
blanda fallentis
imagine mundi.
q* *Prudentius*
lib. 5. 37.

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And this made *Theodosius* more to thanke God, that he was a Christian than a King; considering that he must loose the one, he could not loose the other. Now as to one of you I am bounden in particular, and by him, being a Minister, the despised Ministerie is not a little graced: so for him I pray; that hee may bee an (a) *Abraham* to our *Abimelech*, a (b) *Nathan* to our *Dauid*, a (c) *Ishai* da to our *Isaiah*, (d) an *Isbedmelech* to *Jeremiah*, an (e) *Elisba* to the widow of this Prophet deceased, a light in the Court, a trumpet in the Church, and that (f) *Ahasuerus* may long hold out his golden Scepter vnto him: that by his means (g) *great men may not want such as will tell them the truth*: no (h) earthly *Alexander* accounted a sonne of *Iupiter*, and that no man may bee more respected than a good (i) Pastor: and that he may euer remember that saying of wise *Solomon*: (k) *He that loueth purenesse of heart, for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend*. His *Cyrus* will not be spoken to, *verbis bisinis* in like words, to his *Alexander* hee needeth not speake *dicam i dicitur*, either sweet words or no words. For if one *Antiochus* might bee surnamed *Naly*; and another good Prince called the *Good King*: much more may hee, whose religious knowledge surpasseth all the Princes that haue beene of this nation: and whose humilitie is such, that he will haue his sonne to remember, (l) *that hee differeth not in stuffe, but in use from the rest of his people, and that by Gods ordinance*. I am the bolder for that one, to make choyce of all in the Dedication of his booke: no man knew, loued, conuersed with, and respected this *Author* more than hee. Hee resorted to him in his health, visited him in sicknesse, and preached a learned Sermon for him at his death. Concerning this Author, as he said of *Carthage*, I had rather be silent than say little, and his worthie labours doe speake enough for him, by name, that his (m) *Posthume*, dedicated to his excellent Maiestie, by (n) an excellent Diuine. In a word therefore, whatsoeuer this man did, hee desired to profit others by it: he thought (as it is written (o) of *Bernard* in his life) that hee was not his owne man, but deputed to the seruice of others. Hee was neuer idle, but as (p) *Hierome* reporteth of *Ambrose*, and *Bernard* of himselfe, he did either *read*, or *meditate*, or *pray*, or *conferre*, or *counsell*, or *comfort*, or *write*, or *preach*. And thus (as the (q) *Embleme* is of a faithfull Teacher) he, like a wax candle, in giuing light to others, in a short time extinguished himselfe. Yet in this short time of his, what Art was hee not maister of? what vertue was hee not endowed with? Hee was a complet Diuine, and hath his blessings in the Church, that no mans writings are read of all sorts, and in all Countries with greater grace and profit than his. Hee was peaceable in the Church, patient of wrongs, and free from ambition. For as *Ierome* said of *Neporian*, *Aurum calcans, schedulas consecrabatur*: hee regarded not his purse, but followed his booke, and as *Bernard* said, hee liued *in terra auri sine auro*, in a Kingdom of gold without gold. An excellent gift hee had to *define* properly, *diuide* exactly, *dispute* subtilly, *answere* directly, *speake* pithily, and *write* iudicially: and how hee preached, if these *Sermons* doe giue a testimonie, what witnesse had they who often heard him themselues? I haue published of his now two Discourses, and I onely did it, that these his labours might not perish: I haue no benefit by them, but exceeding great paines. And since I vnderstand that his other labours are in the hands of his friends, to make benefit for his children, I will ease my selfe of the like labour, and be a meanes that they may haue the benefit of the future impression of this booke: the which, how faithfully I haue published, I appeal to the godly and indifferent Reader, and I hope no honest minded

Hist. Eccles.

Al. Doctor Monteg.

(a) Gen. 20.
(b) 2. Sam. 12.
(c) 2. Kin. 11.
(d) Jer. 38.
(e) 2. Kin. 4. 1.
(f) Ester. 3. 2.

(g) *Diffum regibus
deus regibus qui
verum dicat.*
(h) *Plus in vita
Alex. reports, that
Iupiters Priests cal-
led Alexander by
the name of Iupit-
ters son.*
(i) *Bartholomaeus d'o
p. v. h. 42.*
(k) *Provi. 22. 11.*

*I Bernandus d'o
p. v. pag. 95.
O diffum vere
regium.*

(m) *Problema
Theologicum.*
(n) *Maister Sa-
mel VVard,
Fellow of Im-
manuel Colledge.*
(o) *Autur vita
Bern. lib. 2. cap.
4. & 7.*
(p) *Hierim ad
Marcellum.*
(q) *Alis inferni-
ent, meipsum
consumo.*

man

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man will be hired to caluminate it. Thus as one desirous to be *serviceable* in my calling, *profitable* to the Church, not *forgetfull* of my friend, and to testify the *happinesse* of your house, which was in your fathers time, and is now (as it is said of *Aurelian* the Emperours,) *Referta piis & Ecclesia Dei*, replenished with the godly, and a Church of God; and withall to leaue a monument of my dutie to you all, I haue as you see, published this exposition of seuen Epistles vnder your eight names, nothing doubting but it will bee as welcome to you, as by your countenance it may bee profitable to the Church. The God of heauen giue you all that blessing of blessings, which (if *Serome* say true) few men haue, that you may *transire à deliciis ad dilicias*, go on from grace to grace, and be a long time happie in this life, and for euer happie in the life to come.

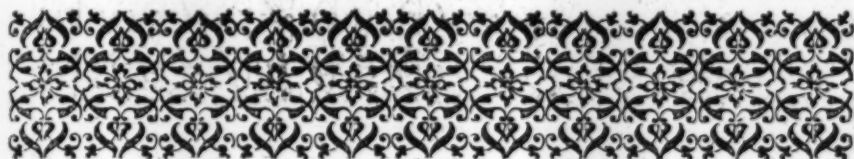
London: Saint *Martins* in the fields, from my worshipfull friend Maister *Oldisworths* house, by which familie (as *Paul* was by the house of *Onesiphorus*) in the time of this late (and I wish I may say) the last visitation, I haue receiued no small refreshing.

March. 12. 1604.

Your Worships to command,

Robert Hill:

Fellow of *S. Iohns* Colledg in Cambridge.



To the Godly and Christian Reader
Grace and Peace.

I Am not ignorant (good Reader) how vngratefull a thing it is, to deale by way of Censure or reformation, in those things wherein others haue gone before; and many times for the smart that followeth, do men beshrow their owne fingers. Yet the warrant of a good calling wil breed peace in his conscience, that herein shall endeuour the obseruance of these rules of Loue, so wis, (a) Iudge the best of that which is done; and (b) referre his owne paines to the glorie of God in the good of others: Hereto I ayme in this second Edition of this booke. For my calling to this worke, when mine accusers stand forth, the executors of the dead shall answer for my discharge. And for mine indenuour to do good; the small gaine of this reuised worke, was truly returned to the right owners thereof: If thou therefore returne glorie to God, for good receiued to thy soule, in this behalfe I haue my desire. Here onely rests the doubt, how this second edition should not be preiudiciall to his good estimation that published the former: I answer, well enough: For I hope he intended (c) the glorie of God in the good of his Church, and the credit of the reuerend Author of this worke. Now if any addition be brought hereunto, his intent is furthered, and wherein then can he be greeued? If one man should helpe poore Orphanes to some lands or lining, hee would not thinke himselfe wronged by another, that should enlarge their iust claimes, or settle their possession in a better tenure: so I trust it faresh in this worke, where thou shalt find upon thy diligent view, in some doubtfull (d) things the Authors meaning truly cleared, his method rectified, many repetitions omitted, and the matter (specially towards the latter end) somewhat enlarged. If any thing be dissonant to the Authors iudgements in his liue-works (which I hope thou shalt not perceiue) rather charge the faults on me through ignorance or misunderstanding, than entertaine in thy heart the least conceit of waivering leuitie in so godly, learned, and iudicious a Diuine, who hath so well deserued of thy loue, if thou loue the truth. Thus craving thy fauorable acceptance of my helping hand, so doe thee good, I end with him, That is the beginning, and the end: Let him that hath an care heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches.

(a) 1. Cor. 13. 5.
Loue thinketh not euill.
(b) It seeketh not her owne things.

(c) See his Preface towards the end.

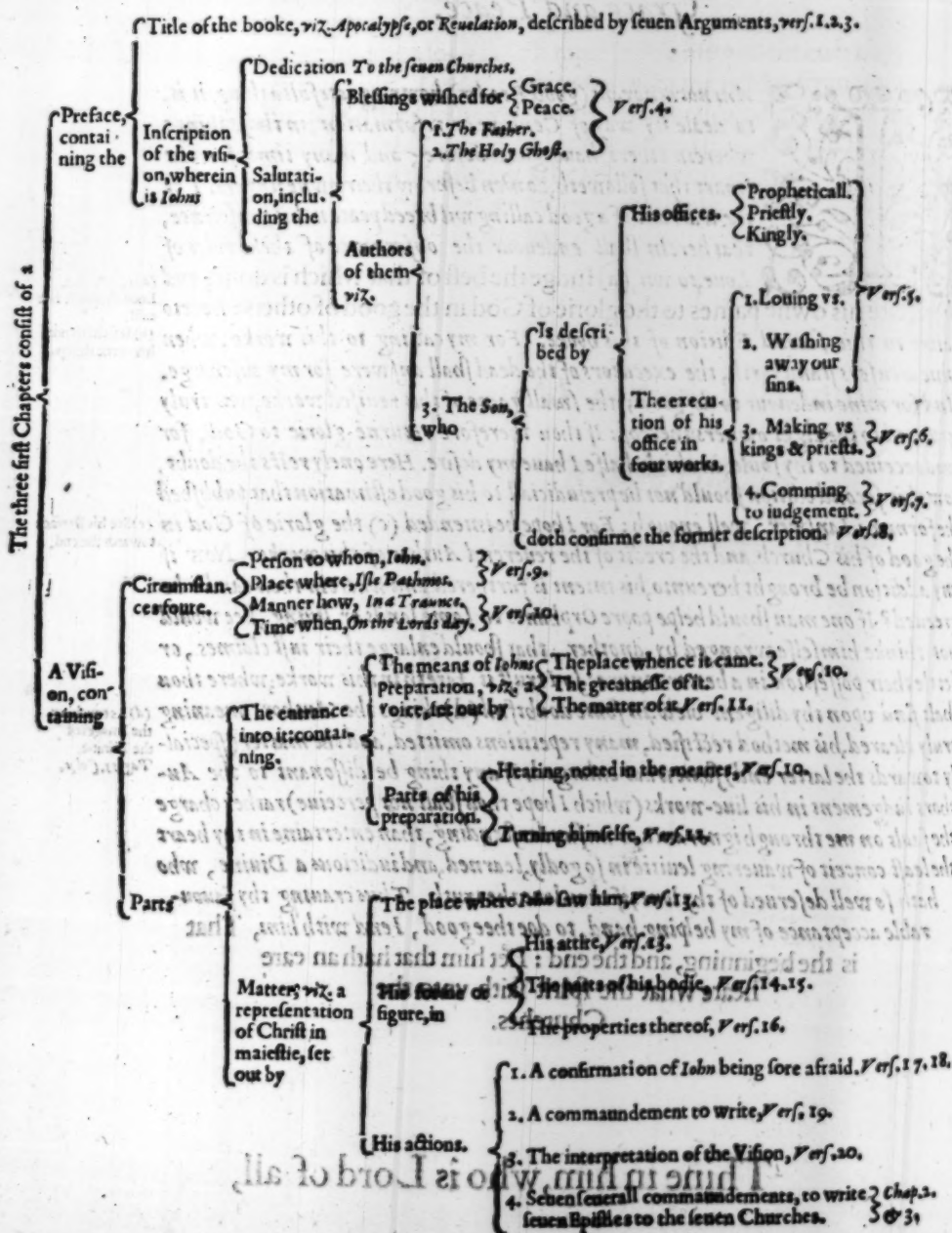
(d) As touching the Images of the Trinitie, Page 53. Col. 1.

Thine in him, who is Lord of all,

T. P.



A GENERAL ANALYSIS OF the Vision shewed to *Iohn*.





A GODLY AND LEARNED Exposition of the three first Chapters of the Reuelation.

REVEL. I. I.

The Reuelation of Iesus Christ, which God gaue vnto him, to shew vnto his seruants things which must shortly be done: which he sent, and shewed by his Angell vnto his seruant Iohn.

BEfore we come to the wordes, wherein is contained singuler matter fit for this time and age, this question must be handled: Whether this Booke of the *Reuelation* be Canonically Scripture: For some haue heretofore, as also in our time called the authoritie of it in question. But wee are without all doubt, to resolue our selues that it is Canonically Scripture, of equall authoritie with the rest of Gods Booke. Our reasons be these: First, the doctrine contained in this booke is Apostolicall, as any shall perceiue which seriously reads the same. Secondly, the stile of this booke is Apostolicall, that is plaine, simple, and easie, if we consider that the matter thereof is Propheticall. Thirdly, this booke hath bene approued and receiued for Canonically by the common consent of Gods Church in all ages since the dayes of *Iohn*, and was neuer refused of any whole Church, but onely of some priuate men. Fourthly, the things foretold in this booke, came to passe as they were foretold: as among the rest (in one for all) may appeare by the Prophecie of the two beastes; whereof one came out of the Sea, the other out of the earth, *Chap. 13.* the one prefigured the Romane Empire, the other the Hereticall Apostolicall Church of Rome: both which in all things are come to passe in these later ages answerable to the Prophecie.

The contrarie reasons brought to improue the authoritie of this booke, are of no moment. 1. *Reason*, *Iohn* nameth

himselfe sundrie times in this Booke; whereas in penning the Gospell he did not once mention his own name, though he had iust occasion so to do: therefore, it was not penned by *Iohn*, but by some other, and published afterward in *Iohns* name.

Ans. The reason is not good: for there is great difference between an historie and a Prophecie. The Gospell of *Iohn* is an historie of Christ: now there is no necessarie reason why one man penning the history of another should name himselfe. But this booke of the *Reuelation* is a Prophecie, in penning whereof it is more requisite the Prophet should put to his owne name; so did the former Prophets: *Jeremy* mentioneth his name in his booke at least an hundred times, so doth *Isay* and *Daniel* almost in euery chapter. Then seeing they do it so often, it is no maruell if *S. Iohn* repeat his name fife sundry times in this whole booke.

2. They obiekt, that his stile in this booke is not the same with that hee vsed in the penning of the Gospell. *Ans.* The difference of the stile ariseth from the difference of the matter, seeing there hee writes an historie, here hee pens a Prophecie. Againe, hee writes not his owne words, but those which he receiued from Christ by particular reuelation.

3. They say, this booke hath bene reiected in diuers ages, as not Canonically. *Ans.* It cannot be proued that it was euer refused of any whole Church, but of some particular men. Now the disallowing of any priuate man, cannot make a whole booke to be reiected: for then the Epistles to the Hebrewes of *James*, and of *Iohn*, should not be Canonically; which yet be receiued of all Churches for the pure word of God.

B

Now

Now come to the words, *The Revelation of Iesus Christ, which God gaue unto him, &c.* These three first chapters consist of two parts: A Preface, and a Vision. The Preface is an entrance to the Vision, contained in the beginning of the first Chapter, from the first verse to the ninth. The Vision it selfe is set down in the rest of these three Chapters. The Preface hath two parts: First, the title of the booke: Secondly, the inscription thereof. The title in the three first verses. The inscription from the fourth to the ninth verse. The title in these words, *The Revelation of Iesus Christ &c.* A *Revelation* is nothing else but a manifestation, or discouery of things secret in respect of men, for the common good of the Church: and so this word is taken in this place.

Revelations from God in Scripture, were shewed three wayes: First, by dreames: Secondly, by vision: Thirdly, by created voyce of God face to face: as we may see, *Num. 12.6.8.* Now this was not by dreame, nor by vision, or voyce alone; but it is a mixt Revelation, receiued partly by vision, and partly by voyce vttered in the vision from the Lord.

In the three first verses, this Revelation is described by seuen arguments: First by the author: Secondly, the end: Thirdly, the persons to whom it was directed: Fourthly, the matter: Fifthly, the instruments: Sixtly, the manner of deliue- ring it: Seuenthly, the fruit of the Revelation. First, the Author is *Iesus Christ*: It comes from him; and it is called his Revelation in these respects: First, not to exclude the father, and the holy Ghost, but to shew the speciall office of Christ, the second person in Trinitie; which is, to reueale, to publish, and to manifest the will of God the father to his church: & for this cause he is called the (a) Angel of the Couenant, the (b) doctor of the Church, the (c) wisdom of the father, and the (d) word of God.

Secondly, it is called the Revelation of Iesus Christ, to teach vs to put difference betweene this, and all Satanicall Revelations: For as God hath his true Revelations, so Satan (who herein may be called Gods ape) hath his counterfeited visions, and deliuers them in shew

like to Gods, but they differ much: First, the Diuels Revelations bee for the most part ambiguous, doubtfull, and vncertaine in speech and phrase, so as a man cannot tell which way to take them: But the Revelations which come from Christ, the author of truth who knoweth all things, and the reasons of them, are certaine and in plaine termes deliue- red. Secondly, the Diuell sheweth his Visions to none but to the wicked, and bad men that be his instruments: But the Lord chuseth the godly, which feare his name, and to them hee reuealeth his secrets, as to *Iohn* in this place. Thirdly, the diuels Revelations euermore tend to set vp, and vphold heresie, wickednesse, A- postacy, and Idolatrie, *Deut. 13.1.2.* but these that come from God serue to erect and maintaine truth, according to godli- nesse; euen pure Apostolicall doctrine, and the sincere worship of God.

Thirdly, it is called the Revelation of Christ, to shew vnto vs his speciall king- ly office in heauen: for being ascended, and exalted to the throne of Maicesty, he sitteth at the right hand of his father, far above al principallitie and power, might and domination; and there doth direct, rule, and gouerne his Church vpon earth according to the good pleasure of his will: for all these Visions serue to di- rect his Church in their obedience to his command.

Whereas Christ Iesus is author of this Revelation, and after his ascension, and exaltation, giues the same vnto his church: Wee may obserue his constant care ouer his Church in this last age of the world. Before his incarnation euen from the beginning, he gaue vnto his peo- ple such doctrine of faith and manners, as was needfull for their saluation, & still from time to time reuealed such prophe- cies of things to come as were meete for them to know.

And now behold the continuance, or rather the increase of this his care, in the new Testament: for beside the per- fection of the former prophecies, and the full manifestation of his blessed will by his Euangelists and Apostles, for all things needful to be beleueed, and done, vnto eternall life; Loe here is added the Revelation of this worthy Prophecie, concerning things to come, for the great good

(a) Mal. 3.1.
(b) Mat. 23.8
(c) 1. Cor. 1.
24.
(d) Ioh. 1.

good, and comfort of his children to the end of the world.

Which God gave vnto him. These words be added to shew how this became the Revelation of Christ: namely, by the gift of God, that is, of God the father the first person in Trinitie: for this is a rule to be observed, *That where the title, God, in any sentence of Scripture, is opposed to Christ, there it importeth the first person the father:* though this bee also true, That sundry times in Scripture, the father alone is termed *God*, without any addition of the other persons; because he is the first in regard of order, and the fountaine of the deitie: for the sonne receiveth the Godhead by communication from the father, and the holy Ghost receiveth it from them both: but the father hath his godhead of himselfe, and receiveth it not by communication from any other.

Here some will say, this seemes strange, that any thing should bee given to Christ, seeing he is God, and hath all things of himselfe. *Ans.* We must conceive of Christ two wayes: first, as God, secondly, as Mediator, and head of the Church. As Christ is God, the father giueth him nothing: for so he is of himselfe the same with the father, & hath all things belonging vnto him that the father hath (excepting personall properties) and is no way inferiour to the father, neither receiveth any thing from him, but giueth all things as well as the father doth. But yet as Christ is Mediator, he is not God simply, but God incarnate, or God made man: and so is said to receive of his father, in respect of his manhood, as himselfe confesseth, *All power is given to mee*, Math. 28. 18. And *Paul* saith, *God gave him a name, above all names*, Philip. 2. 9. *he receiveth of his father the promise of the holy Ghost*, saith *Peter*; Act. 2. 33. And *God made him both Lord of Christ*, ver. 36. & so God gave him this Revelation in this place.

If it be said, this makes Christ inferior to his father, for the receiver is vsually inferiour to the giver. *Ans.* As Christ is God, hee is equall with the father, but as he is Mediator, God incarnate, and made man, he is inferior, and receiveth of him. So much himselfe confesseth, *My father which gave them me is greater then all*. Iohn 10. 39. And in the same respect, *Paul* cal-

leth God the father, *The head of Christ*, 1. Cor. 11. 6. And as Christ now sitteth at the right hand of his father, being Mediator, and ruler of his Church, he is inferiour to his father, and *receiveth his kingdom from his father, which he must give up at the last day*. 1. Cor. 15. 24.

And here wee must consider in what manner God gives his Revelation to his sonne. First therefore Christ Iesus, as hee is mediator, is made Lord of this revelation: so as he may say, it is his own right, and royaltie beeing a part of that law, whereby his Church is now governed, whereof hee is Lord and King. Againe, this Revelation was reveled vnto Christ as he is man, before it was euer knowne to any creature, man, or Angell, by reason of the vnion of his manhood, with the Godhead.

In this which hath bene said, wee may observe, that this booke of the Revelation is Christ his right, and belongeth vnto him as his owne royaltie & priuiledge. For as the laws in any kingdome belong to the prince thereof, and are called *his* lawes alone, and no mans els: So this booke, being a part of that law whereby Christ governeth his Church, is his royaltie alone, for God gaue it him, and hee hath by his Angell sent it to his Church. And that which is here said of this booke, must bee vnderstood proportionally, of all other books of holy Scripture, Christ is made Lord of all, and they are all of them his royalties and possessions. And from hence will follow necessarily; First, That no man in the world hath authoritie aboue this booke, or any other part of Canonically Scripture: indeed Monarchs and Princes have great authoritie and preheminance in their dominions ouer all persons, and ouer all causes of men: but in the Church they with all others owe homage vnto Christ: there hee hath the Canonically Scriptures to bee his lawes, whereto euery one must subiect himselfe. The dispensation of the word, and the administration of the Sacraments, bee his royall ordinances, ouer which none may dare to claime rule or authoritie; for so should the Scriptures haue beene giuen vnto them for their prerogatiues, as they were to Christ; but God gaue them to him alone, and hee disposeth thereof, as pleaseth.

ſeth him. And therefore the Pope in taking vpon him to diſpence with the word, and to mangle the Sacraments, doth herein ſteppe into the roome of Chriſt, and ſo declare himſelfe to be that man of ſinne, by ſeeking to rob him of that princely royaltie which belongs to him alone.

Secondly, that the ſoueraigne power and authoritie of expounding Scripture belongeth to Chriſt alone, & to none other with him. True it is, that man hath a miniſterie committed vnto him, by vertue whereof he may expound Scripture by ſcriptures: but men haue no power of themſelues to determine of the proper ſence of Scripture. And therefore the Popiſh praſtiſe in giuing to the Church abſolute authoritie to determine of the ſence of Scripture, of themſelues without Scripture, is flat robbery againſt Chriſt: for therein they giue vnto men that ſoueraigne power which is proper to Chriſt.

Thirdly, herein wee obſerue the excellencie of this booke, and of the whole Scripture of God: for all of it is the gift of the father to the ſonne, and of the ſon vnto his Church. The like cannot bee ſaid of any writings of men: whatſoever, bee they neuer ſo excellent: herein the Scriptures ſurpaſſe them all. Whereby we are taught to eſteeme more reuerently of the Scriptures of God, than of all the writings of men in the world. Here then behold the ſinne of this age, which more delighteth to ſpeake and heare the ſayings of men in the publique miniſterie, than the glorious word of the euerliuing God. Whereas the writings of men bee full of darkeneſſe, of errour, and deceit: but the word of God is moſt holy and pure, and every way perfect, proceeding wholly from the father of lights vnto his beloved ſonne, who hath faithfully diſpenſed the ſame, for the good of his Church.

To ſhew to his ſeruants things that muſt ſhortly be done. Theſe words contain the ſecond, third, and fourth Arguments, whereby this Reuelation is deſcribed, viz. the end of it, the perſons to whom it muſt be ſhewed, and the matter which it containeth.

Arg. II. The end of this Reuelation is, To ſhew, that is, to make knowne, & ma-

niſt things to come for the good of the whole Church. Whence we may obſerue, that the Papiſts erre exceedingly in debarring lay people (as they call them) from the reading of the Scripture; for the end of this booke is, To make maniſt to Gods ſeruants things to come. And who are Gods ſeruants? Are the Clergie onely, and not lay people alſo? God forbid: the lay man is Chriſt his ſeruant, as well as one of the Cleargie. And therefore, it is Gods will, that hee ſhould learne to know and vnderſtand this booke, like one of his ſeruants. And here conſider, that if this booke of Scripture, which is hard and difficult, muſt be learned of the lay man, then much more muſt he ſearch into all other bookes of God, which bee more plaine and eaſie, as the hiſtories of Goſpell, Epistles, &c.

Arg. III. The perſons to whom it muſt be ſhewed, viz. The ſeruants of Chriſt. This Reuelation was not giuen of God for all men indefinitely, but for al his ſeruants, that is, ſuch alone as repent of their ſinnes, and truly beleue in Chriſt for the pardon of them, and ſhew forth the ſame by new obedience. So he teacheth elſewhere: The ſecret of the Lord is with them that feare him, and his covenant to giue them: v. deſſand ne; Pſal. 25. 14. The Lord will reueale his ſecrets to his ſeruants: the Prophets, Amos 3. 7. And, God will not keepe backe from Abraham the thing he was to do vnto Sodome & Gomorrah becauſe he knew Abraham would do his wil, and teach his family after him; Gen. 18. verſ. 17. 19. The conſideration whereof ſhould admoniſh vs not to content our ſelues with the bare hearing of the word and outward participation of the ſacraments: but to labour principally to become Gods ſeruants, and to ſhew the ſame by the praſtiſe of that which we heare. Hereby ſhall wee receiue inſtruction from the Lord, and grow in knowledge daily more and more: our vnderſtanding ſhall more eaſily conceiue the will of God, for they that will do the will of his father, ſhall know his doctrine, Iohn 7. 17. Here then is the cauſe why moſt hearers after long teaching profit little, but remaine as blind and ignorant as euer, they were, euen their owne impietie: they liue in their ſinnes, and labour not to become Gods ſeruants.

Secondly, in this argument we may obserue, that *Christ Iesus is true God*: for here he is made the head of the Church; euery true beleuer is his seruant, and he his Lord: the Angels of the Churches be his angels, as after we shall see: which prerogative none can haue, but hee that is true, and very God.

Thirdly, in this Argument are those confuted, which hold, that God would haue all to bee saued; and calls all men without exception. For if hee called all effectually, then hee would offer the meanes to all: to wit, his holy word, that so they might bee called to the state of grace. This he doth not: for as wee see, this booke is giuen not to all, but to his seruants: and that which is said of this booke, is true of the whole scripture. *The Lord showed his word* (saith David) *not to all the world, but to Iacob*, that is, his people with whome hee made a couenant, *Psal. 147. 19. 20.*

The fourth Argument whereby this Revelation is described, is the matter thereof, *viz. things which must shortly bee done*; that is, things to come. Whereby in generall we may obserue a difference of this booke from the rest of holy Scripture, which treats of things present or past; this being a prophesie of things to come.

The matter of this booke is described by two Arguments: first, by the necessitie of these things to come, *They must bee done*: secondly, by the circumstance of time when, *shortly, or quickly*.

For the necessitie of these things, they be such, as *must needs be done*. So speaketh the holy Ghost elsewhere of sundry things to come: of offences, *It must needs be that offences should come*, Mat. 18. 7. Of heresies: *There must bee heresies in the church*, 1. Cor. 11. 19. And of afflictions: *Through manifold afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heauen*, Act. 14. 22. And, *They that will liue godly in Christ Iesus, must suffer persecutions*, 2. Timo. 3. 12. From whence I gather, That things which come to passe concerning Gods Church, & the enemies thereof, do come to passe necessarily. This doctrine must be well obserued: for though it bee the truth of God, yet the reason of man will agree vnto it: for some will say, If all things come to passe necessarily, then

in their actions and proceedings men haue no free will: for necessitie and libertie of will cannot stand together.

Answ. They may: indeed constraint & mans free will cannot stand together, but mans will and vchangeable necessitie may well accord: As I shew thus; In God there is most absolute freedom of will, yet hee doth many things of necessitie: as he willeth that which is good necessarily (for hee cannot possibly will that which is euill) and yet he willeth the same most freely. So Christ died necessarily, he could not but die, if we consider the counsell of God; and yet hee died most freely; *For he laid downe his life of himselfe, and no man took it from him*, Iohn 10. 18.

It will bee said againe, if things come to passe by necessitie, then it is in vaine to vse any meanes for the effecting of them, for Gods will must bee done, doe wee what we will. *Answ.* This is mans corrupt reason: these men must consider, that as God hath appointed what things must come to passe; so hee hath appointed the meanes how they shal be effected: and seeing the Lord hath appointed as well the meanes as the end, we should by this necessitie rather bee induced to vse the meanes, than any way moued to neglect the same. To make this more plaine, wee must know there is a double necessitie: one is *absolute*; another *in part*. I call that *absolute necessity*, which cannot be otherwise possibly: as that God liueth, & cannot die, is omnipotent, infinite, &c. Necessitie *in part* is, when any thing done is necessary onely, because it depends on necessarie causes: as fire to burne is necessarie, in regard of that order which God hath set in nature by creation: yet this necessitie is not absolute; for fire would not burne, if God should please to change that order set in nature, as he did when the three children were cast into the hot fierie oven. Dan. 3. 27. Now, whereas we say, *Things to come must necessarily be done*, it must be vnderstood of necessitie in part, and not of absolute: for in themselves they be changeable & contingent, and necessary onely in regard of Gods decree appoyning them which is vchangeable: in regard wherof all things to come bee necessarie. And yet we may not thinke, that the

unchangeable will of gods decree doth take away freedome from man, will, at only inclines the same to one part, & so disposeth, that man should freely will that to be, which God eternally hath decreed.

The second thing whereby the matter of this booke is set out vnto vs, is the circumstance of time when these things must be done. *Shortly*, must be well observed: and howsoever some things foretold were not to be done till many hundred yeres after, yet in two respects it is but short. First, in regard of God, *to whom a thousand yeres are but as one day*, 2. Pet. 3. 8. Secondly, in regard of men, to whom a hundred or two hundred yeres seeme but a short time when once they bee expired, though before they seemed long.

This circumstance of time is set down for two causes. First, to terrifie all carnall and carelesse men: for this booke foretelleth iudgements, plagues, and destruction for the enemies of Gods Church, which must shortly come vpon them: which is a thing worthy our careful consideration in this secure age of the world, wherein men blesse themselves in their sinnes, without feare of Gods iudgements, and say they shall haue peace, though they walke after the stubbornnesse of their owne hearts, putting farre from them the euill day; saying, spare thy selfe, this shall not come vnto thee. But shall the Lyon rore, and the beasts not tremble? Yet the Lord threateneth his iudgements, but men wil not repent. Well, let vs consider this, whether we be young or old, high or low, that Gods iudgements are shortly to come: and let this bee a motiue to raise vs out of the sleepe of sinne, and of securitie. That which *Peter* said of false teachers, is also true of all impenitent sinners, vnlesse they prevent the same by speedy and vntained repentance. *Their iudgement long ago is not farre off, and their damnation sleepeth not*, 2. Pet. 2. 3.

Secondly, this circumstance of time serueth greatly to comfort the seruants of Christ, and to furnish them with all patience, and long suffering vnder any aduersitie, or distresse that may befall them in bodie or mind, or both. Indeed

many are brought to impatience and distrust by afflictions and crosses: But the child of God in such a case must call to mind what the holy ghost hath here set down concerning the prophesies of this booke, which foretell deliuerance for Gods Church, and for every member thereof: namely, *That they must shortly be brought to passe, yet a very little while, & he that commeth for their deliuerance, will come, and will not tarrie*, Hebrew. 10. vers. 37.

Thus much for the matter of this Revelation: now follow the Instruments whereby the Lord doth conuey the same vnto his Church, which is the first argument whereby it is described, in these words, *Which he sent, and showed by his angell vnto his seruant Iohn*. Where two points must be observed, first the action of Christ, which is the ground of their imploiment: secondly the persons imploied therein as his instruments. For the first: *Christ sent and showed this Revelation*. This action of Christ is noted by the holy Ghost for two speciall causes: first to shew, That *S. Iohn* did not pen and publish this booke rashly, but by calling and warrant from God. This teacheth vs what must be our behauiour in all our actions whatsoever we take in hand: we must looke wee haue warrant from God for the doing of the same, by vertue of our calling, and without this wee should not dare to enterprise any thing.

If this duetie were practised, there would be more conscience of the seruice and worship of God, and more care of iust dealing with men then there is in the affairs of this life.

Secondly, this action of Christ is noted to get more reuerent acceptance, and greater authoritie to this booke: for which cause also it was sent by an holy Angell. If an earthly prince should write his letter to his subiect, and withall send it by one of his guard, no doubt the subiect would receiue it most reuerently. Behold this booke is the Epistle and letter of Iesus Christ, sent by his Angell for the benefit of his Church. What reuerence therefore, and acceptance ought this to find? surely a thousand fold more with every one, then the writing of any earthly prince whatsoever.

The second point to be obserued, is the persons whom Christ employeth about this Revelation, and they bee two. An holy Angell, and Saint Iohn. For the first, It hath pleased God in all ages to vse the ministerie of Angels, as a meane whereby hee would conuey the knowledge of his will vnto his Church. The law in mount Sinai was giuen to *Moses* by the ministerie of an Angell; *Act. 7. 38, Gal. 3. 19.* And *Daniel* receiued the reuolition of sundry dreames and visions by an Angell; *Dan. 8. 19.* and *9. 21.* and *10. 14.* And the seuen visions which containe the substance of this booke, were shewed to *Iohn* by an holy Angell. But here we must take heed that wee do not like the Papists ground thereupon the inuocation of Angels, because they be about vs, and bring vnto vs particular messages from the Lord: for before we may pray vnto them, wee must haue from God a particular commandement so to do, and also a promise to be heard in that we aske, or else our prayer is not of faith: but the whole scripture affords no word of command, or promise for any such action, and therefore wee cannot do it without sinne.

The second instrument here employed by Christ, is *Iohn*. This *Iohn* was sonne to *Zacharias*, and so kinsman vnto Christ; a blessed Apostle, and Evangelist which penned one of the Gospels, and the three Epistles which beare his name. This was that Disciple whome Iesus loued. And to procure the more credit and reuerence to this booke, hee describeth himselfe by two arguments: First, by a propertie, calling himselfe *Christ his seruant*: Secondly, by an effect, or action, *in bearing record to Gods word*, *vers. 2.*

For the first, note that *Iohn* doth not call himselfe that Disciple whome Iesus loued, nor the kinsman of Christ, which hee might haue done, being allied vnto him (for *Iohns* mother was sister to *Ioseph* Christs supposed father, and cosin german to the virgin *Mary*) *Iohn* had learned of Christ himselfe, *that the hearers, & doers of the will of his father were esteemed more deere & were vnto him, than any bond of outward alliance could possibly make them* *Mat. 12. 50. Lu. 11. 28.* But he calls himselfe *Christs seruant*, hauing yeelded vp

himselfe to do his wil: for herein stands the dignitie of a Christian to doe service vnto Christ. The blessed virgin had neuer found such fauour with God, to haue bene Christs mother, if shee had not withall become Christs seruante. She bare him in her heart by faith, as well as in her wombe by conception, or els shee had neuer bene saued by him. Hence wee learne, that outward dignities, as bloud royall, noble parentage, & such like, will mouing further a mans saluation: hee that would bee acceptable vnto Christ, must become his seruante by beleeuing his word, and doing his will, hauing cast off the old man, which is corrupt, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. So *Paul* saith, *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God*, *1. Cor. 7. 19.* and henceforth he saith, *I no man after the flesh, but if any man be in Christ, hee is a new creature*, *1. Cor. 5. 16. 17.*

Againe, consider in what regard *Iohn* is here called the seruante of Christ: not onely for that he beleued in Christ, and obeyed his will as all true Christians do; but more specially because hee was an Apostle, and did seruice vnto Christ in the worke of his ministerie, which was his particular calling. So *Paul* writing to the Romans, calleth himselfe an Apostle, and seruante of Christ; *Ca. 1. 1.* And he rendreth a reason thereof *vers. 9.* Because hee did seruice vnto him in preaching the Gospell. Hence we are taught that wee must not onely shew our selues Christs seruants in our general calling of Christianitie: but especially in our particular callings and offices, after the example of Christs blessed Apostles. It is a good thing to professe seruice vnto Christ, by hearing his word, receiuing his Sacraments, and keeping his Sabbath: but vnlesse therewithall wee shew the power of godlinesse in our particular callings, our outward profession is flat hypocrisie. Thus, magistrates, ministers, husband, wife, parents, children, maisters, seruants, buyer, seller, and every one in his lawfull calling should carefully obserue: for vnlesse in the particular duties of their speciall callings (as the magistrat in the duties of a magistrat, &c.) they doe seruice vnto Christ

Christ, their publicke service in the outward duties of religion shall neuer commend them vnto God, be it neuer so glorious, *Malcha, 6. 6. 7. 8.*

Verf. 1. Which bare record of the word of God, and of the testimonie of Iesus Christ, and of the things that he saw.

Here is the second argument whereby *Iohn* describeth himselfe; namely, by this action, or effect, *in bearing record to the word of God*, for partly by writing the gospel, and partly by preaching, he bare witness, and testified that the word of God was true. And because the word of God hath diuers parts, the Law and the Gospel; hee shewes in the next words, that hee meanes especially the Gospel, adding, *and of the testimonie of Iesus Christ*, that is, of those things which *Iesus* sayd and did. And that no man might cal into question the truth of his testimonie, hee professeth himselfe to haue beene *an eye witness of all those things wherof hee bare record*, saying, *and of all those things which he saw.* And here hee alledgeth his testimonie to the Gospel, to proue himselfe a faithfull penman of this booke, that so it might haue more reuerence: for hee which was faithfull in penning the Gospel of *Christ*, the same is also faithfull in penning this Prophecie of the Church.

In this testimonie wee may obserue, that the doctrine of Gods word is an infallible marke whereby to know the true Prophet of God, and also to distinguish him from all false Prophets. God foretold his people, that *false Prophets should come among them for their triall*, *Deut. 13.* But how shall they discern them? surely by their doctrine: for though they shew wonders, yet if their doctrine tend to draw men from the true God to Idolatrie, they are false Prophets and should die. When our Sauour *Christ* was asked, *By what authoritie he did those things*, *Luke 20. 2. 3.* Hee approued his authoritie by the testimonie of *Iohn*, (who bare witness of him, *Iohn 1. 15.*) and confirmed the calling of *Iohn* by the truth of his doctrine, which (themselues being witnesses) *was from heauen*, *Luke 20. verf. 4. 5.*

Hereby then we see the error of the Papists, who teach, That the onely note

of a true Prophet, is to confirme his doctrine by a miracle; and that hee which cannot do so, is a false Prophet. But this note of difference is not true: for false Prophets may confirme their lying vanities by signes and wonders, as we may see *Deut. 13.* And so doth Antichrist, *2. Thess. 2. 9.*

The first argument by which this Revelation is described, is the order & manner of propounding it to the Church, and it stands in foure degrees: First, *God the father giueth it to Christ the mediator, & head of the Church.* Secondly, *Christ giueth it to an Angel.* Thirdly, *the Angel committeth it to Iohn the Apostle.* Fourthly, *Iohn directed and assisted by the holy Ghost, deliuereth it to the Churches.*

Now as this particular booke was, so no doubt all other holy Scriptures were conueyed to the Church: from whence we may obserue. First, the constant loue of God to his children, by this his speciall care, in propounding and deliuering his will and word to his Church.

Secondly, that this booke, and so all other parts of holy Scripture, are in their kind most perfect and excellent.

Thirdly, that the Church of Rome blasphemeth in calling the written word of God, *a dead letter; & dumbe Iudge, matching generall counsels with it for authoritie*, and teaching, *that the vniuersall consent of the Church is above Scripture, for interpretation, and giues life and sense thereto; which otherwise of it selfe were but an inicke letter, and dumbe word.*

Verf. 3. Blessed are they which read, and they that heare the words of this prophecie, & keepe those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Here is the seventh and last argument whereby this Revelation is described, to wit, the fruit, effect, and the profit which comes of it, euen *true happinesse*. This prophecie concerneth the present & future state of the church: the reading and hearing whereof ioyned with carefull keeping, bringeth with it *true blessednesse*, that is, fellowship with God, and life euerlasting.

In this Argument wee may obserue, First, the end of this booke, and so of all other bookes of Scripture, viz. *to bring men to happinesse, to fellowship with God, and life*

life everlasting. These things were written (saith S. Iohn) that you might believe that Iesus is the Christ, and so believing, might have eternall life, Ioh. 20. 31. Again, hee declared to them the word of Christ, that by it they might have fellowship with God the father, and with his soune Iesus Christ, 1. Iohn 1. 3. In which fellowship is true happinesse. Christ himselfe saith: Search the Scriptures, for in the you think to have eternall life, 1. Ioh. 5. 39. And in this they differ from all other bookes & writings of men; for mens writings be penned either by the light of nature, and so bee erroneous, and misle the end of true happinesse: or else they be penned by them which haue direction from the word, & so all the truth they haue, leading to true happinesse, is borrowed hence; when as the Scriptures of themselves do directly guide men thither.

From the consideration of this blessed end of holy Scripture, wee may obserue, first, That the opinion and practise of the Church of Rome is damnable, who barre the people of God from reading and hearing the Scriptures in their vulgar tongue. For in depriving them of this meanes (as much as in them lyeth) they barre them of their saluation, and they do directly crosse the purpose of S. Iohn, who doth therefore pronounce him blessed, that shall heare and read this booke, with conscience to keepe: and obey it; that he might allure and draw all men to do it with delight.

Secondly, we are hereby admonished with all care and diligence to read and meditate in Gods word: That place before named is most excellent, *Search the Scriptures*, Iohn 5. 39. Euen as wee would search for gold or some precious thing which we would fain find (so the word imports.) And he addeth the reason: *For in them you think to haue eternall life*. The same is wisdomes counsell, *Prou. 2. 4.*

But some will say, I cannot read, I was neuer brought vp in learning, and therefore I cannot search. S. Iohn cuts off his excuse in the next words, saying, *Blessed he is also which heares the wordes of this prophesie*. As if he should say: though he cannot read, yet if hee heare and keepe it, hee is blessed. Here then is the duty of those which cannot read the Scriptures, they must procure others to read vnto

them; and by hearing and keeping they shall be blessed.

Thirdly, by this scope & end of scriptures, wee must learne to carry in mind this plain difference between the books of God; and writings of men: Gods word bringeth a man which keepees it, to happinesse; but mans writings of themselves cannot doe so, vnlesse they haue light from the word of God. If this distinction were imprinted in our harts, we should not bee so delighted as many are, to heare or speake the wordes of God mixed with the wordes of sinful men, specially in the publicke ministerie. In former times the Lord forbad his own people to *sow their field with mingled seed, or to make them garments of diuers things, as of linnen and wollen*, Leuit. 19. 19. And no doubt the same God doth mislike, that the pure seed of his word should bee mingled with the sayings of erroneous & sinfull men, when the same is sowne vpon the furrowes of mens hearts.

Secondly, in this seuenth Argument we may obserue the right maner & way of hearing and reading the Scriptures: a point worthy all serious consideration. It stands in two things: First, wee must set downe with our selues a certaine end, why wee reade, and heare the Scriptures, which is, that wee may attaine to true happinesse, standing in fellowship with God, and life euerslasting. This end must bee the motiue to induce vs to heare, and read the word of God, and when this takes place in our hearts, it will bee of force to make vs reade, and heare with care and conscience, which becometh Gods word. Secondly, wee must keepe in mind the things wee read, or heare; so saue the text: *And keepeth the things which are written*: which word imports, that by diligent obseruation, we should lay them vp in our harts. This is a weightie duteie, and seriously commended vnto vs of God. *Bind up the testimonie, & setle vnto the law among my disciples*, I say 8. 16. And Mary is therefore commended, because she kept in her hart the wordes of Iesus, Luke 2. 19. 51. It was Dauids practise: *I haue hid thy saying in my hart*, Psal. 119. 11. And hereto tendeth Christs encouragement, pronouncing them rather blessed, *which heare the word and keepe it, than those which haue Christ, & gaue him suck*, Lu. 11.

27. 28. And James calleth it *the ingrafted word*, James 1. 21. because it should abide in our hearts like a fyence in a stocke, and neuer bee remoued, but there grow, and fructifie vnto life eternall.

Now because this is a point of great difficultie, and the want hereof the cause offo little profiting after much hearing and reading; I will therefore shew how (by Gods grace) in hearing and reading the word of God, a man may keepe the same in memorie.

First, a man must learne the grounds or elements of religion, commonly called the Catechisme, for they are the foundation of all knowledge: without which a man shall neuer vnderstand the Scripture to his comfort, nor keepe the same in memorie. The Apostle saith the Hebrewes were *dull of hearing* (the deepe things of God in Christ) *because they had not well learned the first principles of the word* Heb. 5. 11. 12. This all ignorant persons should well obserue, specially the aged, that they may find in themselves the cause of their ignorance and dulnesse, euen want of knowledge in the Catechisme. They thinke it a disgrace to bee brought vnto it now they are old: but if they would not be euer learning, and neuer come to the knowledge of the truth, they must lay in themselves this good beginning, and learne the principles of religion.

Secondly, wee must not rush vpon Gods holy ordinance, but before we either come to heare, or reade, with reuerence prepare our selues thereto. Most men at this day vse to prepare themselves before they come to the Lords table; and so they ought to doe before they come to heare the word: for God ordained both for this end, to bee meanes to bring men to true happinesse: they differ onely in this, that the Sacraments are the visible, and the Scriptures the audible word of God. At the giving of the law, *The people that must heare it, were sanctified three dayes before.* Exod. 19. And when they did offer sacrifice, or eat the Pascheouer, both priests and people must bee sanctified: and the same thing for substance must wee performe before wee come to heare the word of God. This preparation stands in two things: First, wee must put out of our hearts all by-thoughts, all

delights, and cares of worldly affairs, and *set our hearts* (as Ezra did) *to seek the law of the Lord*, Ezra 7. 10. Secondly, we must make our earnest prayers to God, that he would open our eyes, that we may see his will; soften our hearts, and make our ears attentiu, as *Lidias* were; and also giue vs grace to embrace his word, and keepe it: For Christ is the onely doctor of the heart by his spirit, without whose inward teaching we can neuer learne vnto saluation.

Thirdly, when wee are about the holy exercise of Gods word, the frame of our heart should be thus disposed.

I. *It must be an humble heart*: for the Lord resists the proud, and *giues grace to the humble*, Iam. 4. 6. *Them that bee mecke, will be guide in iudgement, & teach the humble his way*, Psal. 25. 9. A proud heart is so stuffed with selfe loue, that there is no roome for the word of God to lodge in. But the heart that is lowly in it selfe, through the conscience of sinne, that is the heart in which the Lord by his graces will take vp his abode, *Isay* 57. 15.

II. *It must be an honest heart*: such as hath no maner of purpose to liue in any one sinne whatsoever, but (though it feele corruption in it selfe) is resolued to please God in all the wayes of his commaundements, and that continually: such an heart haue the good hearers, resembled by the good ground *Luke* 8. 15. As on the contrary, that is a wicked heart, which resolueth to cherish, though it bee but any one sinne whatsoever.

III. *It must bee a blesening heart*. The old Iewes heard the word, but it profited them not, because *they mingled it not with faith in their hearts*, Hebrew. 4. 2. where hee compares the heart to a vessel, in which there must bee both the word, and faith: these two must be mingled together, and then it will bee a word of power, of life, and saluation. Therefore when wee heare the threatnings of the law, or the promises of the Gospell, we must labour to resoluie our hearts of the truth thereof. But incredulitie whereby men except against the word, as not pertaining vnto them, is the mother of forgetfulnessse. *The old world knew nothing of the flood, because they did not beleue*, Mat. 24. 39.

IV. *It must be an hearing heart*: such

as is pliable to the word: *Sacrifice and burnt offerings* (saith *David*) *thou wouldst not, but mine eares hast thou prepared*, Psal. 40.6. As if he should say, beside those bodily eares which thou hast given mee by creation, thou hast bored new eares in my heart, so as I can by thy grace attend and listen to thy word. And when God saith, *Seek ye my face*, this hearing heart will answer, *I seeke thy face O Lord*, Psal. 27. vers. 8.9.

Fourthly, after we haue heard or read the word, *we must become doers of the same* euen in the duties of our vocation. We see euery man more skilfull in the works of his owne trade, by reason of his dayly exercise therein: euen so the constant practise of Gods word will make vs expert in it, and cause vs to keepe it in perfect memorie. And these are the right means to become good hearers and readers of the word of God.

Thirdly, this benediction pronounced vpon them that heare, read, & keepe the propheties of this book, serues to induce euery child of God (as much as in him lyeth) to keepe in memorie the whole word of God, but specially these propheties of things to come that concerne the state of the Church; for therefore did God reueale them, that they might be remembered. When the Angel had told *Daniel* the state of the Church, from his time to the comming of Christ; he bids him, *Shut up the words, & seale the booke, till the end of the time*, Dan. 12. 4. meaning, that he for his own comfort should hide them in his heart. And Christ saith to his disciples, *When yee see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet: let him that readeth, consider it*, Math. 24. 15. *Behold I haue told you before*, meaning things to come, verſe 25. shewing, That he would haue his children to marke, and remember those weightie things that are foretold, concerning the state of the church.

For the time is at hand. Here is a reason of the former benediction, for seeing the time of the accomplishing of this prophesie is at hand, & must shortly bee fulfilled: therefore those bee blessed which read and keepe the same in memorie. And it is an answer to a secret obiection; for they might haue said, wee need not to read or remember this pro-

phesie, seeing it shall not bee fulfilled in our dayes; but hee addeth: *The time is at hand*, wherein they must be fulfilled, and therefore it must bee marked. These words for substance were in the first verse; where it is said, *The Revelation was of things that must shortly bee done*. And here they be repeated againe. Whereby hee would teach vs, That these propheties contain weightie matter, to be deeply considered, and earnestly thought on. And *S. Iohn* repeats the same for two causes: First to awake the members of the church out of the sleepe of securitie, and make them stand vpon their watch continually: for though they cannot fall into the dead sleepe of sinne, yet the slumber of securitie may ouertake them: the wise virgines slumber, as well as the foolish, *Math. 25. 5.* And the spouse of Christ, the true Church, confesseth, That she sleepeth, though her heart waketh, *Cant. 5. 2.*

Secondly, to confirme and hearten the church, and all true members of Christ, against the afflictions to come: for herein is the common saying true, *He that is forewarned, is fore-armed.*

Now in these words (*The time is at hand*) Christ would teach vs to observe, That whatsoever thing may befall the members of Christ in this life, whether afflictions, temptations, death, or the last iudgement it selfe, all will come shortly. This consideration ought to take place in our hearts, being of great vse in our liues: as to stay vs from many sinnes, so to moue vs to do all things with good conscience. And the want hereof is the cause of much euill: *The bad servant bears his fellowes, because hee thinks his master doth defer his comming*, Math. 24. 48. & 9. *The old world went on in sin, neuer regarding Noahs prophesie, and so knew nothing till the flood came and swept them all away*, Math. 24. 39. We should lay these to our hearts, and alwayes thinke with *Paul* (a) *the Lord is at hand*. The rather, because wee haue had the Gospell, and peace with all temporall blessings these eight and thirtie years: now the state of the church is interchangeable, one while peace, and then trouble: so as it is like, this peaceable state will not long continue, but wee must bee tried. And the time of our triall is at hand, for whatsoever must befall

befall the Church, will come shortly. We must therefore prepare for trouble, and so wee shall finde it the lesse greivous.

Vers. 4. *Iohn to the seven Churches which are in Asia, Grace be with you, & Peace from him, which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.*

Here beginneth the second part of the Preface, to wit, the inscription of this vision, and it hath two branches: First, a dedication, in these words: *Iohn to the seven Churches which are in Asia.* Secondly, a salutation, in the next words: *Grace be with you, & peace, &c.* to the 9. verse. In the dedicatio obserue first the penman, that dedicated this booke: secondly, the parties to whom it is sent. For the first, the penman is *Iohn*, who here againe repeats his name, to shew and certifie euery reader of this booke, that he was without all doubt the true penman of the holy Ghost, in writing this Reuelation. But though he repeat his name, yet hee doth not adde any titles of honour, or commendation, as hee did in the first verse. Wherein hee giues vs a true paterne of modestie and humilitie, which is neuer to speake in our owne cause to our owne praise, but onely in cases of necessitie, when Gods glory may bee aduanced, and the credit of our particular callings maintained. This *Paul* praesised, who often humbles himselfe, and calls himselfe *the (a) least of all the Apostles*, yea, *the (b) chief of all sinners*: yet when the credit of his Apostleship came into question, then he sets out himselfe, shewing hee was a true Apostle, one of the chiefe, and aboue those which did falsely call themselves so, as we may find in both of his (c) Epistles to the Corinthians.

(a) 1. Cor. 15.
(b) 1. Tim. 15

(c) 1. Cor. 9.
1. 2.
2. Cor. 14. 5.

Secondly, the persons to whom hee wrote, were, *the seven Churches in Asia* concerning them note two things: first, hee writes to churches, secondly to the churches in Asia. For the first: why writes he to the churches, rather than to the church, seeing there is but one onely Catholicke church? *Ans.* The church may be considered diuers waies; first, as it is the whole company of the elect, & so it is but one: secondly, as the same is parted into se-

uerall branches and companies, one part being in one countrey, and another part in some other. Wherein also, euery seuerall congregation, professing the Gospell, is a particular Church. And so there may bee many Churches, all of them beeing members of one Catholicke Church: As the Sea is onely one, yet it consisteth of many parts, which taking their names of the Countreyes whereto they adioyne, are called so many particular Seas; as the English Sea, the Spanish sea, French, Italian, Scottish Seas, &c. And of particular Churches must *Iohn* bee vnderstood in this place.

Now *Iohn* chuseth rather to write to Churches, than to particular men. First, because the matter of this booke concerneth the Church, being a Prophetical Hystorie, touching the state of the Church to the end. Secondly, because particular Churches, which bee true members of the Catholicke Church, are the pillars and ground of truth. 1. *Timoth. 3. 15.* And the Church is so called, not that her authority is aboue the word: but first, because it is the treasure house wherein the Scriptures are preserved, from age to age, against the rage of Gods enemies. Secondly, because the Church giues testimonie to the truth of Gods word. And thirdly, because it publisheth the truth of Gods word by vertue of that ordinarie ministerie which God hath ordained therein.

Secondly, in the dedication of this booke, among all particular Churches God directeth him to make choise of those seven in Asia: no doubt for special cause, First, because they were then most famous Churches, as the chapters following, and the Hystories of the Church do plainly shew. Secondly, that the calling of the Gentiles to the light of the Gospell, which long before had beene foretold, might bee more euident: for here the Iewes are passed by, and the Gentiles sent vnto.

Lastly, we may here obserue, That *S. Iohn* knew no prerogative of the Church of Rome aboue other churches: for if it were the mother Church, whereon all other Churches should depend, as the Papists would haue it; I would know of the why *Iohn* passed by it in the dedica-

tion

tion of this booke, which containeth matter needful for al churches to know.

Grace be with you, and peace from him which is, & which was, & which is to come: & from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Here begins *Iohns* salutation of the vii. churches. Salutations bee of two sorts, *Civill*, and *Religious*. *Civill*, is that which men vse ordinarily one to another, wishing health, welfare, and such like. *Religious*, is that, which is peculiar & proper vnto the church, comprehending in it a benediction also. And such is this here vsed by *S. Iohn*. It may also be called *Apostolicall*: because it is so vsuall with them in their Epistles. And they vsed it the rather, because it is so correspondent to their ministerie: which stood in two things; first, *in preaching*, which is the ministerie of grace and reconciliation, the things here desired: secondly, *in prayer*, whereto belonged the duetie of benediction, to pronounce a blessing vpon the people; as did the priest in their ministracion vnder the law, *Num. 6. 23.* and our Saviour Christ with his Apostles, when they preached the gospel; and as every minister should do to his whole congregation, before they depart. And this is also included in this salutation: for hereby they blessed those churches to whom they did write.

But to come to the words, which bee most excellent, and containe in them the summe of the gospel. *Grace*, in scripture signifieth two things: first, Gods fauour; secondly, some gift of God freely bestowed. Now here by *Grace* is meant not any particular gift of God, but the gracious fauor and goodwill of God, whereby hee accepts of some in Christ for his owne: for it is here opposed to peace, a gift of grace, and therefore cannot signifie the same thing.

Now marke, *S. Iohn* in this salutation begins with grace, because it is the foundation of all happinesse, and of all Gods blessings: whatsoeuer wee are, and all that we haue, is of grace; our election, redemption, vocation, iustification, and sanctification; our faith and repentance, & our preseruacion in them both proceed from this fountaine of Gods free grace. It is the beginning, and the end of all; yea it is all in all in the matter of our saluation: first wee must haue this, and

then we may look for al other blessings.

And Peace. Peace is taken sundry waies in the scripture: first, for welfare & good successe in things of this world by Gods blessing, *Exod. 18. 7.* *Moses* & *Isithree* saluting, aske each other of their peace, that is, of his welfare; and so it is partly taken in this place. Secondly, for that vntie and blessed concord which is in the kingdom of God, among Gods children: and so it is especially taken here. And in this sence it hath six parts, every one whereof is a most worthy blessing.

The first is peace with God: which is, when we stand in the fauour of God, reconciled to him in Christ Iesus, *Rom. 5. 1.* Secondly, peace with Gods Angels, for they guard such as be in Gods fauour, and carry them as a nurse doth her child in her armes, *That they hurt not their feet at any stone*, *Psal. 91. 11.* and they reioyce at our good estate. The third, is peace with mans selfe, when his conscience will not accuse him, but excuse & cleare him; being washed in the blood of Christ. This is that *Peace of God, which passeth all vnderstanding*, *Phil. 4. 7.* The fourth is, peace with Gods Church, notably prefigured by the peaceable habitation of wild beasts, and tame together, *as the Lyon and the Calf, the Wolfe and the Lambe, the child & the Cockatrice, &c.* *Isay 11. 6.* and plainly to be seene among the beleeuers, *Act. 4. 32. Whowere all of one mind and heart.*

The fift is, Peace with the enemies of Gods Church, so far as it is for the good of the Church, and the glory of God. So *Ioseph had peace in Pharaohs court*: so *Daniel had peace in the court of Nabuchadnezzar*: for when the three children were cast into the ouen, wee must not thinke that he did reuolt vnto Idolatrie, or hide himselfe: but being in fauor in the court obtained priuiledge to be excused. The sixt is, *Peace with all the creatures of God*: with the beasts of the field, foules of the ayre, and fishes of the sea. This the Lord promiseth in the couenant that hee will make for them with all his creatures, *Hosai. 2. vers. 18.* yea, *The child of God shall tread vpon the Lyon and the Serpens; and they shall not hurt him*, *Psal. 91. Vers. 13.* And this his peace stands herein, That by Gods blessed providence hee shall find helpe, and comfort from all Gods creatures.

In this place, whether wee take peace for outward welfare, or for the concord of Gods Church, yet it is placed after grace, because it followeth as a fruit thereof: First, a man must bee in Gods fauour, and then come all the blessings of peace vnto him. This then is the meaning, *Grace be with you and peace.* That is, I wish you the fauour of God in Christ with peace, the blessed fruit thereof, even all outward welfare, and especially the concord of Gods Church, hauing peace with God, with his holy Angels, with his Church, with your owne hearts, with your enemies (as farre as may bee for Gods glorie) and with all his creatures.

The 7th.

Whereas S. *Iohn* wisheth grace vnto the churches in the first place; he would teach vs, That the fauor of God is to be sought for aboue all things; for the Apostles practise must bee our precept. So did *Dauid*: *Many say, who will shew vs any good: But Lord lift thou vp the light of thy countenance vpon me,* Psal. 4.6. As if he should say, Let the most of the world seeke what they will, as riches, pleasure, &c. yet my desire is of thy loue & fauor aboue all. And oftentimes he called God *his portion, his rocke, and castle of defence, the thing that he longeth for*; to shew, that all his ioy was in Gods fauour. And so it should be with vs: but we little practise this, because wee bring from our cradles naturall presumption, which persuaades vs, that wee bee in the fauour and loue of God. But we must cast off this false persuasion, and take a new course; & labor first to see, that we be out of Gods fauor, lost sheepe, prodigall children, in our selues, yea, the verie firebrands of hell; and this, to see our owne want of grace, is the first step to grace. Secondly, feeling this want and miserie in our selues, wee must earnestly desire, and in our soules hunger and thirst after the loue and fauour of God in Christ aboue all earthly things. Thirdly, wee must by the hand of true faith lay hold vpon the grace and mercie of God in Christ, propounded in the promises of the Gospel, and apply them to our selues particularly.

Secondly, after grace hee wisheth vnto them *Peace*: where note, the true order of seeking for the blessings of this

life, we must not begin with welfare and prosperitie, but our first and chiefest care must be, to obtaine the grace and fauour of God. So Christ bids vs, first, to seeke the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: for when wee are in Gods kingdom of grace reconciled to him in Christ, then all things needfull shall bee ministred to vs, *Matth. 6. 33.*

This discouers the bad practise of *The 7th.* most men euery where, who in seeking the blessings of God, begin at the wrong end. They will toile themselves in their callings to get wealth, honour, pleasures, and preferments; but the fauor of God in Christ is not regarded: which notwithstanding is the true and right foundation of all outward welfare.

Here some will say, if God giue mee wealth, honour, and reputation, then hee loues mee; for these be signes thereof. I answer, These be no sure tokens of his fauor in Christ, for those that be his enemies, may enioy them all, as *Iob. 21. 7. to the 14.* This *Dauid* perceived, *how the wicked might flourish in their outward prosperitie, hauing more than heart could wish,* Psal. 73. 3. 7. *And yet they stood but in slippery places.* And therefore, let no man herewith deceiue himselfe: he that wanteth Gods fauour in Christ, is but a cursed wretch, & a firebrand of hell, though he had all the world for outward things, at his command. For all earthly things seuered from Gods speciall grace, are but an heape of miseries. The wicked mans peace is no peace, sayth the Lord, *Isay 48. 22.* And the man that hath Gods grace in Christ, though hee want all worldly benefites, yet hee hath more than all the world without it: for hereby alone hee is truly blessed and happy.

From him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Here is set downe the first cause and author of these two, *Grace and Peace*, to wit, God himselfe, distinguished into three persons, the Father, Son, & holy Ghost. The Father is noted in these words, *Which is, & which was, & which is to come.* The holy ghost in these, *And from the seven spirits which are before his throne.* The Sonne in the fifth verse: *And from Iesus Christ, which is a faithful witness: & first begotten of the dead, & Lord over the kings*

kings of the earth, unto him that loved us, & washed us from our finnes in his owne blood, &c.

S. Iohn in the first place describes the father, by a distribution, which expresseth the true nature of God in these words: *Which is, was, and is to come.* In which hee alludes to that, *Exod. 3. 14. 15.* where *Moses* demands of God, If the people should aske who sent him, what he should answer? The Lord bids him say, *Ebich, Iehouah-bah sent mee*: which two names serue to one end, namely, to expresse the nature of God. They are translated, *I am, and the Lord*: but these English words doe not fully expresse their signification. Yet S. Iohn expounds them here, making *Ebich*, to signifie *him which is, which was, & is to come.* Which words of Iohn also in the originall bee more full in sense than our English tongue can well expresse. And yet they may be thus explained: *Grace and Peace be from him, which is in himselfe, & of himselfe a most perfect and absolute substance, which was a most perfect substance & which is to come, a most absolute, perfect, simple substance and essence.* In these words are touched fundry wheightie points.

First, touching the nature of God, namely, That *God is a most absolute perfect substance, and essence, which hath his being in himselfe, of himselfe, and from none other.* Paul saith, *An idol is nothing*, 1. Cor. 8. 4. that is, nothing subsisting in nature, but a meere fond deuce of mans braine: But the true god is an essence subsisting, and that of himselfe alone perfectly; and herein differeth from all Idols and false Gods.

Secondly, hereby wee see a difference betweene God and al his creatures. Eue-ry creature is a substance, as *Angels and Men*: likewise mans body and soule are substances: yet none of these haue being of themselves, but from God, and of God. And yet wee must not conceiue, that the creatures are parts of God, though they haue their substances and being of him; for then each creature should be God: for the communication of the diuine substance cannot bee without the diuine nature. But Gods substance is indiuisible, and incommunicable to the creature. My meaning then is, that God made the creatures out of him-

selfe of that matter which he created by his word; and preseruet them being made: Which by the way should teach vs to returne our bodies and soules by obedience vnto God, in lieu of thankfulness, endeavouring his glorie all the daies of our life.

Thirdly, hence wee learne, that the Lord is *Eternall* every way, without beginning or ending: for it is hee *which is, which was, and which is to come.* Angels & the soules of men they bee eternall; but not every way: though they be eternall in that they shall neuer die, yet had they a beginning. Secondly, they are eternal, not absolutely, but by participation; for God made them eternall: but the Lord is most absolutely of himselfe eternal.

Fourthly note, he sayth not from him which shall bee, but *from him which is to come*, that is, to iudgement: to giue vs to vnderstand, That this eternall God is also a iudge of all his creatures, especially men and Angels. A point of speciall vse, to moue vs to walke before God, with all good conscience. If any shall flatter himselfe, thinking he shal be dead before that day come: I answer, it may be so. What then? thinkest thou thereby to escape his iudgement? No verily: for this God commeth to iudge thee particularly by death, and thereby to reserue thee to the iudgement of the great day. Oh, that wee would seriously thinke on this; it would be a meanes to moue vs to repentance, by breaking of the course of sinne, & endeavouring to keepe a good conscience in all things, *Acts 24. 16.* And so shall wee bee ready to meet him at his comming, whether by death or iudgement.

And from the *seuen spirits which are before his throne.* These words commonly are expounded of seuen Angels of God which stand before the throne, & minister vnto him. But it cannot be meant of them, for two causes: first, because Grace and Peace is here said to proceed from these seuen spirits; but it cannot come from the holy Angels, which attend to minister before the Lord. Secondly, in this verse, which is a benediction, or a salutation of Iohn to the Church, the seuen spirits, are set before Iesus Christ, the second person of the Trinitie; but there is

no reason nor respect, for which the angels should bee placed before Christ. The words are rather thus to bee expounded. *And from the seven spirits &c. that is, from the holy ghost.* This exposition is most agreeable to all the circumstances of the text; and the holy ghost may be called by the name of the *seven spirits* for two causes: First, because though hee be only one in substance, yet he is *seven*, that is, *manifest* in regard of gifts & operations, which proceed from him. Secondly, *S. Iohn* here speaketh of the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, as hee saw them in vision: (for here he setteth down one vision which he saw) now he beheld the holy ghost in forme of seven lights in a vision, *Reuel. 4. 5.*

Which are before his throne. This hee speaks by comparison taken from earthly kings: which sitting in their thrones, do there shew their glorie and maiestie. So *S. Iohn* saw in vision God the father sitting in his throne, & Christ at his right hand; and before the throne the holy ghost. Which maner of apparance pro-ueth not, that the holy ghost is inferiour to the father and to the sonne: but hereby is expresse the office of the holy ghost: which is, to bee sent from the father, and from the sonne to the Church, to enlighten the members thereof.

This then is the meaning of the words, *And from the seven spirits which are before his throne*; that is, Grace and Peace bee with you from the holy ghost, the spirit of the father, & of the sonne, who from them both is sent vnto the church, to enlighten, to sanctifie, and to gouerne the members thereof.

The 7th.

First, hence wee learne, that the holy ghost is God: for looke from whome cometh grace and peace, that same is very God: but here grace & peace proceed from the holy ghost, and therefore he is very God.

Secondly, we learne, that we may and ought to direct our prayers to the holy ghost: for by whom grace and peace is giuen, to him we may direct our prayers: but grace and peace are giuen by the holy ghost; therefore we may pray to him for them. This is the rather to bee obserued, because there be some which doubt, whether we may pray to the holy ghost: but they may as well doubt whether hee

bee God. They say, we haue no example hereof in Scripture. *Ans.* It is not true: for in this benediction *Iohn* prayeth to the holy ghost, saying, *Grace bee with you, and peace from God the father, &c.* For in substance it is as much as if he had said thus: *Thy grace and peace, O father, and thy grace and peace, O holy ghost, and thine, O sonne, be with thy Church.*

Thirdly, in this description of the holy ghost, by standing before the throne of the father, we may obserue, That the holy ghost is a person subsisting, and not a qualitie. Some hereticks that acknowledged the godhead of the father, denied the godhead of the sonne and of the holy ghost: and concerning the holy ghost, haue held, That hee is nothing, but the vertue and qualitie of the father. But this is most false: for as the father is a substance sitting vpon the throne: so here we see the holy ghost is a substance standing before the throne.

Fourthly, here we learne, that the holy ghost is a distinct person from the father and from the sonne: for he sitteth not in the throne, as doth the father, nor sitteth at the fathers right hand, as doth the son: but standeth before the throne apart from them both.

Verse 5. *And from Iesus Christ, which is a faithfull witness, and first begotten of the dead, and Lord over the kings of the earth, vnto him that loued vs, and washed vs from our sinnes in his owne blood.*

That is, grace and peace from Iesus Christ. Where Christ Iesus is ioyned with the father, & the holy ghost, in bestowing grace and peace on his Church. Here some may aske, Why is Christ the second person of the Trinitie placed after the holy ghost, the third person? *Answer.* For two causes. First, in regard of his office; for Christ is to bee considered two wayes: first, as he is the sonne of the father; secondly, as he is the mediator of the Church. As he is the sonne of the father, he is the second person in Trinitie, and so before the holy Ghost in order. But as he is mediator, so hee is after the holy ghost, *I say 61. 1. The spirit of the Lord is vpon me, he hath sent me to preach.* Where Christ confelleth himselfe to bee sent by the

the holy ghost as being mediator and in that respect he is set after him. Secondly, he is placed after the holy ghost, for the better progress of the hylone: for the manner of them which pen the Scriptures, is to set them in the last place of whom they mean to speak most, as *Math. 1.* the Evangelist setting down the genealogie of Christ from *Abraham* (though among them all was none so excellent as Christ) yet placed him in the last, because he intended to goe on with the hylone of his life and death. So *Iohn* placed Christ the last, because he purposed to make a large description of the person and office of Christ, which he could not so fully have brought out, had placed him before the holy ghost.

From this first verse, till the ninth, he describes Christ at large: First, by his offices: secondly, by the execution thereof. His offices are three: First, his prophetical office in these words: *which is that faithfull witness.* Secondly, his priestly office: *The first begotten of the dead.* Thirdly, his kingly office: *And the prince of the kings of the earth.*

The execution of all his offices is particularly set down in the words following: *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sinnes; and to death till the ninth verse.*

Touching his offices. In his Prophetical office wee may note three things: First, *that he is a witness.* Secondly, *A faithfull witness.* Thirdly, *that faithfull witness.* First he is a witness, *1 Iay 5. 4. I gave him to be a witness to his kindred.* By his witness bearing is signified two duties of his Prophetical office: First, to reveale the will of his father to his Church: secondly, to certifie the Church of the certaintie of the same: and in these two stands his whole office prophetical.

For the first, to reveale his fathers will to the Church immediately, is his office as he is a Prophet: for *you have seen God, but he in which came from the bosom of the father, and he hath declared him.* *Iohn 1. 18.* Now Christ declares the father, by making knowne his will and that hee hath done not only in his owne person while he lived on earth; but from the beginning by all the Prophets, and so will do to the end by all true preachers: for in the Church the father doth all things by

the sonne. When the Lord raigned fire on Sodom, *Gen. 19. 24.* there *Iehovah* the father raigned down by *Iehovah* the sonne. So when the covenant was made to our first parents, it was made in Christ the promised seed. It was renewed to *Noah*, *Abraham*, & the patriarchs, from the father by the sonne: for that *Iehovah*, which appeared to *Moses* in the bush, *Exod. 3. 15* by *S. Paul* called Christ, *1 Cor. 10.* The Prophets & the Apostles wrote as they were inspired by Christ: they were but his instruments to speake and write, that he put into them by the holy ghost. The matter, & the stile, & phrase of the Scripture, all came from Christ. Nay, when any particular man comes to understand the Scriptures, this is by the working of Christ, he opens his eyes. Hee gave the disciples understanding, as they went unto *Emmaus* to understand the Scriptures.

The second duty of Christs prophetical office is, to certifie men in conscience of the truth of his fathers will. This certificate is two fold, generall, or particular: generall, when hee certifieth men in conscience, That the word written or spoken by man, is the word of God: neither nature, nor learning can do this, but it is proper to Christs prophetical office. And for this he saith to his disciples, *(a)* *Hee will send them the comforter, which shall lead them into all truth:* that is, reveale Gods will vnto them; and assure their heart that the same is true. Vnto this assurance two things are required. The outward meanes, which is the word it selfe; and an inward cause, which is the principall, to wit, the operation of the holy spirit.

By this doctrine three points are resolved: First, this demand of the Papists, How a man can come to know, that the Scriptures read and taught, be the word of God? *Answer.* We must here have recourse to this faithfull witness, and desire of him his spirit, whereby the mind must be enlightened, and made able to discern the things of God: for no naturall man can doe it of himselfe. Secondly, wee must have Christ his testimonie of Scripture, in the Scriptures themselves: for in them he setteth downe his testimonie of the Scriptures.

But some will say, if Christs testimonie of scripture be set downe in the scriptures, why do not all men know this testimonie, and receiue it? I answer, The shining of the sunne before a mans face, is not sufficient to cause him to see: vnlesse he haue in his eyes the gift & sense of seeing; Euen so, it is not ynough for a man to haue in Gods word the testimonie of Christ, that Scripture is Scripture; but withall, he must haue in himselfe the light of the spirit, revealing that testimonie to his conscience: and then in reading or hearing the Scripture, in marking the matter, and style, the maiestie and power thereof, hee shall bee able to see in euery sentence the testimonie of Christ, assuring his conscience, that the same is vndoubtedly the word of God.

A second doubt resolved by this doctrine, is this, *How can a man know the true religion*, seeing the Turke, Papist, Jew, & Protestant, haue their seuerall religions, and die in them? I answer, Wee must haue recourse to Christ, this faithful witness: and looke whereto hee giues his testimonie, that we must hold for true religion. Now the scriptures bee as a letter sent from heaven to the Church; where in Christ hath set downe his owne testimonie of the true religion: which in trial shall be found to bee the religion of the Protestant, and not the religion of Jew, Turke, or Papist.

A third doubt to bee resolved by this doctrine, is, *How to know the particular truth in matters of religion, when as sundry men professing the same religion, be of diuers opinions.* *Ans.* Still wee must haue recourse to this faithfull witness and Prophet of the Church, he is the Iudge of all controversies in religion; & in the scriptures, if we marke them, wee shall see his iudgement. *Quest.* But if there bee diuers opinions about scripture it selfe, and euery one giue a seuerall sence vnto it, who must then be Iudge? *Ans.* In this diuersitie of opinions, yea, of the scriptures themselves, wee must still haue recourse to Christ, & that in the scriptures alone: for though there were a thousand diuers expositions of one place, yet by the scope and circumstances thereof conferring it with other like places of scripture, a man shall bee able to find out the

true sence; for Christ in the scripture expoundeth himselfe.

The particular certificate of Christ belongeth also to his prophetical office: and that is, to assure men in their consciences, that the promises of the Gospell, with all the benefits therein contained, as Iustification, Sanctification, & life eternall, which in the word bee generally expounded, do belong vnto them particularly; as to Peter, in John 8. 26. And this assurance (as the former) is principally wrought by the word, not barely read, but preached: for therein by the inward worke of the spirit, the generall promises be particularly applied. This Paul imports, saying, Ye haue the spirit of adoption, which testifies with our spirit, wee bee the sonnes of God. Rom. 8. 15, 16.

Hence we learne, that the doctrine of the Church of Rome; and of all others which hold, That men cannot bee assured of their saluation by faith, is wicked and damnable; for they deny out of a part of Christs prophetical office, wherein the dignitie thereof doth consist, that is, to assure a man particularly of the truth of Gods promises vnto himselfe. And in this, hee differs from all other Prophets and Apostles, which bee witnesses: for they can witness onely outwardly to the eare; but he can speake & testifie to the conscience: Neither can any of them certifie any man particularly, though their ministerie tend to that end.

Secondly obserue, Christ is not onely a witness, but a faithfull witness; and so he is for these causes: First, because hee testifies not his owne will, but his which sent him, namely his father, John 8. 26. Secondly, he testifies all his fathers will, neither adding thereto, nor detracting from it, Job. 17. 4. Thirdly, because he teacheth his fathers will sincerely, in the same manner which hee receiued it, not altering, changing, or deprauiing any part thereof. As my father taught me, so I speake those things, John 8. 28.

Thirdly, Christ is called that faithfull witness, to distinguish him from all other witnesses. The Lord hath sundry faithfull witnesses; as the Prophets, Apostles, the Church, nay the Sun and Moone, Psalm 89. 37. but Christ alone is that faith-

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(1) Job. 8. 14.

faithfull witness. First, because his witness is (a) authentical, sufficient of it selfe, and needs no other confirmation. The testimonie of the Apostles & Prophets is not of false authentication & certain; but as it consents with Christs witness, and proceedeth from his spirit. Secondly, he is that witness, because he is the Lord of that house, whereto he gives witness, namely, the Church; but the Apostles and Prophets are but servants there, Heb. 3. 5. Thirdly, Christs witness is inward: it speaks directly to the conscience; and there gives vndoubted assurance: but the witness of men, as of the Prophets and Apostles, is outward onely; it comes to the ears, it neuer binds and assures the conscience of it selfe. And thus we see why hee is called here, *that faithfull witness*.

The 7th.

First, whereas Christs Doctor and Prophet of the Church is called that faithfull witness, we learne, That all ministers of the Gospel ought to be faithfull witnesses: for every minister of the Gospel, when he preacheth Gods word is in the roome of Christs, and speaketh that vnto the church which Christs would speake. That they may bee faithfull witnesses, sundry things are required at their hands. First, they must deliuer the testimonie of Christs above all other things, and before all testimonies of man in the office of their ministerie. This was meat and drinke to Christs, so (b) *teach his fathers will*. Elazar, Abrahams eldest seruant, shewed his fidelitie, in that *hee would not eat or drinke till he had done his masters message*. Gen. 24. 33. Much more ought the ministers of Christs haue speciall care of that weightie message committed vnto them. Secondly, they must testifie all the will of God concerning matters of saluation, as faith, obedience, and a godly life: among men, we count him a faithfull witness, which testifies all the truth, and no more but the truth: so should it be with all ministers, that be Gods witnesses to his Church. Herein Paul cleared himselfe, That he was free from all mens blood, seeing he deliuered the whole will of God in matters necessarie for saluation, & kept nothing backe. Thirdly, hee must neither adde vnto, or take away, much lesse in any case depraue the word of God. And this is the true make of a faithfull

(2) Job. 4. 14.

witness. For false prophets teach some truth, but wishal they adde something of their owne, or detract from Gods truth something that they bought not. In the church of Rome a man may hear things concerning morall vertues handled soundly: but come to Iustification; and thereto they adde the merit of mens works; & so they deale with Faith, and Repentance, matters of saluation: they take away one part, and adde another to the scriptures: they hold the Creed in word, yet in deed they deny the same, as by their doctrine may appeare; and so shew themselves false witnesses. Fourthly, a faithfull witness must deliuer the testimonie of Christs in that spirituall manner which best becometh the maiesty of God, and which he best approueth, that is, in a plaine, easie, and familiar kind of speech, that the conscience of the sinner may be touched; & the vnderstanding of the simple may be edified. When the word is otherwise deliuered, as in the enflaming words of mans wisdom, or for ostentation of wit, or much reading, though nothing be said but the truth; yet he that so dispenceth it, is an vnfaithfull witness, because hee corrupteth the word by his vaine deliuerie. And this is the sinne of this age in many ministers, who teach the truth indeed, but yet in such sort, as it may appeare, they seeke themselves, and not Gods glory, respecting little the edification of the simple, so themselves may be famous for wit, eloquence, and learning. But these men *make merchandise of the word*, like to huxters, that by starching, blowing and spicing, set a glosse vpon their ware, to make it seeme that which it is not: which is a greuous sinne, & such as wil banish the Gospel out of our land, vntill it be reformed.

Act. 20. 26. 27

Secondly, this title of Christs, *That faithfull witness*, doth discouer vnto vs the damnable practise of men in the sinne of vnbeleefe: for Christs this faithfull witness hath giuen testimony to his word which is preached, that the same is true. And therefore (a) *they that beleene it not, do make Christs a false witness, and a lyer*, than which, what can be more horrible? & yet this is the common sinne of this age. For when the law is applied, who is afraid? and when the gospel is preached, yet who

beloueth godly reports? Gods ministers may say

(a) Job. 3. 20.

say with the little children: *We have piped unto you but you have not danced; we have mourned unto you, but you have not wept.* This deadness of heart, whereby men are not moved with the word preached vnto them, is an euident argument of this fearfull vnbeleefe, whereby they make Christ a false witness. Thus therefore should moue vs to consider in our selues, the harmfulnesse of this sinne, that so we may strue against it, and labour to giue free passage to the word into our hearts, trembling at the law, and reioicing in the Gospell, that so each part thereof may haue his perfect worke in vs: for which end also wee may consider, That amongst those which shall haue their portion in the burning lake, vnbeleefers are set in the first ranke, *Reuel. 21. 8.*

Thirdly, seeing Christ Iesus is that faithfull witness, which giueth testimony to mens consciences in particular of their saluation; wee learne, That euery one which professeth himself to repent, is bound in conscience to beleue: that the promises of the Gospell, and the benefits thereof, as Election, Redemption, Iustificacion, Sanctification, and Saluation, belong to him particularly. And though this be against all humane sense and reason, yet seeing we haue a faithfull witness, auouching the same, wee must submit our selues vnto his testimony: for by vnbeleefe wee greatly dishonour our witness beater, by denying truth vnto his record. Here then wee see, it is no presumption (as the Papists say) to beleue our election and saluation in particular: nay, it is an horrible sinne in euery one that repenteth, not to beleue it; seeing Christ, a most faithfull witness, testifies the same to our consciences by his holy spirit. Hereto also serue the Sacraments instituted by God, to seale vp vnto euery worthy receiuer, Christ and all his benefits. The ministers giuing of the bread and wine to them that truly repent, is as much as if Christ should say, *Beleue thou, and life eternall be- longeth to thee.*

And the first begotten of the dead. In these words is contained the second office of Christ; namely, his *Priesthood*: he principally actions whereof stand in dying, in rising againe from the dead, and making

intercession for vs. As *John 14. 1.* Iudeth in the estate of the family among the Iewes; comparing Christ to the first borne; for as among them, hee which was first borne, and eldest of the familie, had many priuiledges and pre-eminences above his brethren as Lordship, right of the Priesthood, and double portion, &c. so Christ he hath his priuiledges, yea euen Christ enuied, he hath his prerogatives among the dead; above all that are dead. So *Paul* expounding this title applyeth him, *1. The first borne* and *beginning of the dead*; *that hee might in all things haue the preeminence*, *Coloss. 1. 18.* The priuiledges of Christ dead, and buried among all the dead, are two: first, That he was the first that euer rose from death to life, and so to glorie. Some indeed haue risen before Christ from naturall death to naturall life, as *Lazarus*, but it was to die againe. And *Moses* and *Elisha* assumed their bodies in the Mount with Christ in his transfiguration: but yet they laid them downe againe to the former miserie of corruption, for a time. But Christ Iesus rose from death, to life eternall, neuer to die againe. And his resurrection was the first steppe into his glorie. Secondly, that by his owne power he raised vp himselfe, and by the vertue of his godhead quickened his manhood. The most godly man that is, or euer was, cannot do soe, but all the Saints of God are raised from death by vertue of Christs resurrection, through that mystical union which is betwixt Christ the head, and all his members; by means whereof, the power of Christ his godhead, which raised vp his manhood, is conveyed to all his members in their resurrection from death to life. And therefore is Christ called (a) *The first fruits of them that sleepe*, because as the first fruits of corne which was offered vnto God, did sanctifie the whole crop: so Christ his resurrection, did make acceptable vnto God the resurrection of all his members.

In this title is comprised a notable comfort for all Gods children, against the immoderate feare of death. If *Iohy* had said, *Christ is the first borne among the dead*, it had bene a great comfort: for then had he shewed, that the living saunt

(a) 1. Cor. 15.

on earth, were children in Gods familie, hauing Christ for their eldest brother: but calling him the first begotten of the dead, here is a further comfort: the Lord sheweth hereby, what speciall regard hee hath to the faithfull that be dead: for euen then, when they be dead, they continue members of his familie, and haue Christ Iesus dead and buried, reckoned among them for their eldest brother. In regard whereof Christ hath a double right among the dead: first, of a King; secondly, of a Priest. The right of a king, hee hath, to commaund his members to rise againe; and to enter into glory after him. The right of a priest, whereby he offered vp himselfe in death, a sacrifice acceptable to God for the sanctifying of the death of all his members: for by his death hee tooke away the sting of death, and hath made vnto them a sweet sleepe in the graue, as in a bed of downe, out of which they shall one day rise to eternall life and glorie.

And *Prince of the kings of the earth*. Here is the third title given to Christ, wherein his kingly office is expressed. He is called a *Prince of the kings of the earth*, in two respects: First, as hee is God, the sonne of God, equall with the father, and so is king, together with the father and the holy ghost, gouerning all things with them by the same diuine power, in heauen, in earth, and in hell. Secondly, as hee is Mediatour and Redeemer, God and Man, in two natures. In this respect hee sayth of himselfe; *All power is giuen to me in heauen, and in earth*, Math. 28. 18. And Paul saith, *God gave him a name above every name, as which every knee should bow*, euen as he is Mediatour. And in this second respect he is called, *A Prince of the kings of the earth* in this place. Now Christ being a king, must needs haue a kingdome, which is not of this world, standing in the might & policie of man, as earthly kingdomes do; but it is spirituall, directly concerning the hearts and consciences of men, where he ruleth by his lawes. And this is his priuiledge, which cannot bee giuen to any creature, man, or Angel, to rule and raigne spirituallly in the heart and conscience. This spirituall kingdome of Christ is exercised not by dint of sword, or force of armes, but by his holy word, through the

worke of the spirit: for he is a king, which *carrieth his scepter in his mouth*, euen his word, I say 11. 4. *That is the rod of his power, by which hee rules the heart and conscience, euen in the midst of his enemies*; Psalm. 110. vers. 2.

Now Christ is here intituled, *Prince of the kings of the earth*, in two respects: First, because he (and he alone) as Mediatour, can giue lawes to bind the consciences of men; yea of the greatest Monarch in the world. Secondly, because he hath soueraine power ouer all kings and potentates, as well as ouer others, to saue, and to destroy: for not onely hath hee power to make a law to bind their consciences; but also if they keepe it, to saue them; if they breake his law, hee hath power to destroy them, bee they what they may bee. *Hee hath the keyes of heauen, and of hell, to open, and to shut at his pleasure* Reuel. 3. 7. He can, if he wil, lead them to life, and saue them; or els leave them to their owne mind, and so destroy them. Hence arise sundry instructions.

First, seeing our Saviour Christ is a prince of the greatest Monarchs of the world, and is farre aboue them: we must then with all feare and trembling reuerence his high maiestie. Great is that reuerence which men yeeld to earthly princes: Oh then what reuerence should we performe to him which is prince and Lord of all the kings of the earth? Wee cannot conceiue, what honour wee owe vnto him, which is advanced in the throne of all maiestie. And this our reuerence wee must shew, by hearing his word, with trembling and beleeving hearts, as I say saith, cap. 66. 2. We must not dare to thinke, or speake of Christ, without great reuerence: *At his name every knee must bow*; that is, at the consideration of the great maiestie whereto hee is now exalted, every heart, euen of the greatest Monarchs, should be touched with submission, awe, and reuerence. If this tooke place in mens hearts, the name of Christ would not bee so prophaned and blasphemed as it is; in iesting sports, in cursing and swearing, whereby men toss it like a ball, without all reuerence to so great a prince as is the king of kings.

Secondly, seeing hee is king of kings, wee must giue him absolute obedience.

Princes

Princes on earth must be obeyed, so far as they command in Christ, but he must be obeyed without exception, not onely absolutely, & perpetually in all his commaundements, but most willingly and freely (as it is said) *his people come freely in the day of assembling*, Psal. 110.3. Men will say, they beleue in Christ, as hee is their Sauior, but that is not ynough, they must obey him also, as hee is the king of princes. Many perswade themselves, they haue a good faith in Christ their Sauior, which little regard obedience to him, as their King and Lord. But they deceiue themselves: for none can haue Christ for their Sauiour, which haue him not for their Lord & maister: neither doth that man beleue in Christ, which will not stricke to do his will. And this our obedience must bee shewed in performing those duties which we heare, and learne out of his holy word.

Thirdly, seeing Christ is *king of kings*, all princes must do him seruite: for they be all inferiour and subiect to him, Psal. 72.11. This is the counsell of the holy ghost: *(a) Bewise now O yee kings, be learned yee iudges of the earth: kisse the Sonne, &c.* that is, inwardly reuerence, & outwardly obey him. This their homage must bee shewed, in all the affaires of their kingdomes; They must frame their lawes after the lawes of Christ Iesus; they must shew mercie; exercise iudgement, keepe Courts, Assises, begin, end, and continue warre according to his commaundements. And so in every thing, the direction of Christ should be their guide, as it was to *Dauid*, *Thy lawes, O Lord, haue bene my counsellors*, Psal. 119.24.

Fourthly, if Christ be soueraigne king; then all earthly princes are bound to plant, and establish in their kingdomes the religion of Christ, else how can they shew themselves his loyal subiects? Many imagine, That earthly princes may admit vnto their subiects any religion for the peace of the ciuile state: but this is against the equitie of Gods word in this place, for wherein can earthly princes doe homage vnto Christ, if they maintainenot his religion? And their duetie in this behalfe is signified plainly in the parable of the marriage. For when they that were bidden, did not come, the

king sent forth *his (b) seruants*, (which may bee vnderstood of Christian magistrats) *to compell them to come to this marriage*: for that is the magistrats duetie, in respect of the outward profession of true religion: *heere ad vultis fluitant vultis or the*

Fifthly, seeing Christ alone is prince of the kings of the earth, whence wee learne, that kings on earth in their dominions are *soveraigne gouernours* ouer all persons, and in all causes next vnder Christ; he is king of kings absolutely, and they are vnder him alone, and haue no other head but him. Wherby wee see the presumption and arrogancie of the Pope, and Sea of Rome, in claiming supremacie aboue all kings and princes in the whole Church vpon earth. This is a deuice of the diuell, & high treason against Christ: for hereby hee is robbed of this royall prerogative, to be the onely prince of the kings of the earth.

Lastly, seeing Christ is king of all kings, we must not be discouraged, when we be called to suffer any affliction for his truth: let the tyrants of the earth rage, and bend their force to hurt vs, yet wee haue a king aboue them al, for whom we suffer: hee is their king, hee can stay and bridle them, and if hee please, confound and bruite them in peeces. They cannot do any thing, but that which he permits; for *he rules in the midst of all his enemies*, Psal. 110.2. hee can breake them in peeces like a potters vessell. Thus much of the offices of Christ.

The second part of Christs description is by the execution of his offices, which consists in foure works. The first contained in these words, *Vnto him which loued vs*: the second in these, *which washed vs in his blood*: the other two, in the two verses which follow, viz. 6. and 7. For the first, *which loued vs*, that is, *Iohn* & the churches of Asia, & by proportion, al other churches, being parts of the true church. The loue of Christ hath 3. degrees: the first is a generall loue, whereby hee loues all his creatures, approving the same to be good as they be his by creation. The second, is the loue of mankind, in that he was content to become a redeemer for mankind, after their fall, and not for any other creature; no not for the Angels, which fell as well as man: who therefore remaine without all hope of saluation.

The

The third & principall, is that whereby he loues his elect and chosen children; which is *this special fauour, whereby he accepts of them to life everlasting*. This third degree hath two parts: First, it is taken for his purpose to loue: as when he saith, *I haue loued Iacob and hated Esau*; Rom. 9. 13. Secondly for the act of louing; which is the declaration of his purpose by spirituall benefits, 1. *Iob. 3. 1. Behold, what singular loue: God hath shewed vnto vs, that we should be called the sons of God*: noting the declaration of his loue in the gift of adoption. So in this verse, by the loue of Christ vnto his Chnrch, is meant the actuall declaration of his special fauour, in accepting them for his children, and bestowing many singular blessings vpon them.

Whereas S. Iohn placeth this in the first place of all the benefits of Christ, *That he loued vs*; he would teach vs, That this special loue is the very ground of mans redemption; which excludeth all foreseene faith and workes from beinge motiues of mans election in Gods eternall counsels, and so proportionally, all foreseene finnes from being motiues in God of mans reprobation.

It may be obiected, The loue of God as also of man, respects a thing as it is good: First, the thing must be good, and then it is loued: and so in mans redemption God first foresees their goodnesse, and therefore chuseth them. *Ans.* There is great difference betweene the loue of the creature, and of the creator. The loue of the creature follows the goodnesse of a thing; because hee seeth it is good, therefore he loues it. But God the creator first loues the creature before it bee good, and hence it comes, that it is good, because he loues it.

Secondly, whereas Saint Iohn and al the churches of Asia, as other true churches do beleue, and are assured that Christ loues them (for that Saint Iohn taketh for granted) this should moue all men to haue this care, to labour aboue all things to be rooted and grounded in the loue of God, seeing hee placeth that in the first place. This is the principall thing, wherein the Apostle would haue the Ephesians rooted and grounded: and therefore praie, *That with al Saints they may bee able to comprehend, what is the*

breadth, and length, depth, and height thereof, Eph. 2. vers. 17. 18. 19. This we do when we are assured in heart and conscience, by the working of Gods spirit, that hee loues vs in Christ. So that hee which denies vnto vs the assurance of Gods loue in Christ, takes away the very ground of our saluation.

Now that we may haue this assurance of Gods loue, wee must in all good duties to God & man draw neere to God with our hearts, keeping a good conscience in all things, and then will God draw neere to vs. *If any man loue me* (saith Christ) *hee will keepe my word, and then my father will loue him, and we wil come in vnto him, and dwell with him*, Iohn 14. 23. meaning by the holy ghost; which shall *shed this loue into our hearts*, Rom. 5. vers. 5. causing vs to increafe in the feeling thereof, as wee grow in faith and obedience towards him.

And hath washed vs from our sins in his blood. Here is the second benefit and action of Christ to his Church. Where first of all the very phrase, *hath washed vs*, doth import, that the finnes of men are as filthy spots in their soules: and that himselfe and this Church of God were touched with a serious consideration of their vilenesse, by reason of their sinnes: for washing presupposeth former filthinesse & pollution. Thus did *Dauid* most sensibly feelee his owne filthinesse, and see his miserable estate, when hee desired the Lord *to wash him thoroughly*: confessing thereby, that his soule and bodie were so fouly stained, and polluted with sinne, that once washing was not ynough: but sayth hee, Wash me againe, and againe, rince, bathe, and swill mee in the blood of Christ, till I be purged and cleansed from all my finnes. And this same affection should be in euery one of vs: wee should labour, that our hearts may bee touched with a liuely sence of our vile estate, by reason of our finnes, which make both bodie and soule most vgly and filthy in Gods sight: and that the stain hereof is so deeply set in our soules, that we can neuer be cleansed, but by the washing of Christ his own hand, and that in his owne hearts blood: yea, that one washing will not serue, but wee must be rince and bathed therein. For till such time as this consideration doe in some

(*) Psal. 51. 2

Some measure take place in our hearts, it is not possible that wee should loath sin as we ought; or come to this comfortable assurance of Gods loue, that he hath washed away our finnes in his blood: for this humilitie in our souls by reason of our sins, is the beginning of all true grace and comfort. Now this worke of Christ in washing vs from our sins, doth comprehend a double benefit.

First, the remission of our finnes, whereby the guilt and punishment due to them is taken away. Secondly, the mortification of sinne, whereby the corruption of sinne is remoued and abolished. And wee must obserue, that *S. Iohn* propounds this benefit generally without limitation, saying, *Which washed vs from our finnes.* That is, from all our sins: to giue vs to vnderstand, that if any beleue truely in Christ, he hath pardon of all his finnes without any restraint or limitation, either of number or qualitie, be they neuer so many, or neuer so great.

By his blood. How can blood wash away filthinesse? nay, it rather defiles a man. *Answer.* This washing stands not in the substance of Christs blood, but in the merit thereof: for that substance of blood which was shed is lost, and wee know not what is become of it, whatfoeuer the Papists say: but the merit thereof remaineth still. And Christs blood deserves to purge away sinne, rather than any other mans blood, as of *Peter, Iohn, &c.* because his blood was the *blood of god* (not of the Godhead) but of him who was both God and man. For the manhood of Christ was receiued into the union of the second person. And so it may be called the blood of God, as *Paul* saith, *(a) God redeemed his Church by his blood,* that is Christ, God incarnate. And so it being the blood of him, that is God, is more meritorious than the blood of any creature whatfoeuer. Besides Christ was appointed by God to be a publicke person in the worke of redemption, and in his death and passion he stood in the roome and stead of all his elect, so as when his blood was shed, their blood was shed, because it was shed for them. But the blood of other private men cannot answer for any besides themselves, because it is shed onely for themselves. Then damnable is the doctrine of the

Papists, who hold the blood of Martyrs, can merit for others, being applied vnto them: for seeing they be but priuat men, and suffered in their owne persons onely, they cannot profit any other thereby.

By *blood* we must vnderstand the passion of Christ, a part for the whole, and withall his fulfilling of the law vpon the crosse; for in his suffering hee fulfilled the law, and in fulfilling the law hee suffered. These two cannot be seuered, saue onely in thought. And so this word contains the whole obedience of Christ, whereby he procured the remission and mortification of our finnes. Here then wee see two notable benefits of Christ vnto his church; his loue, & the washing away of finnes; which *S. Iohn* sets down to moue the churches with reuerence & diligence to read, and delight in this booke. All of vs will say, wee are sure God loues vs, and hath pardoned our finnes in Christ: why then doe wee not shew our loue againe to him by hearing and reading his word, set downe in this, or any other booke of Scripture, and by yeelding answerable obedience thereto? Why then do we not offer vp our selues souls and bodies, to serue him, as the Apostle requires, *Rom. 12.1.* by way of recompence for his mercies and loue shed out vnto vs? But alas, that is more common, which is most shamefull, to turne Gods grace into wantonnesse: for when men say God loues them, and hath washed away their finnes, yet they rebell against him: when as these two benefits are here recorded to bee inducements of continuall loue, and obedience to his holy word.

Vers. 6. *And made vs kings and priests to God, euen his father, to him be glory and dominion for euermore, Amen.*

In these words is set downe the third worke, and benefit of Christ, bestowed on his church, and on euery true member thereof. For the better vnderstanding whereof, we must consider in them foure points: First, the dignitie and excellencie of all true beleeuers and members of Christ, *They are kings & priests.* Secondly, when they be made kings and priests in this life, noted by the phrase of speech, *made made.* Wherin he speaketh of the church

(a) A. & 30. 38

church on earth; and vseth a word that signifieth the time past. Thirdly, the manner how they become kings and priests; they are not so borne, but Christ hath made them such. Fourthly, to whom they be made such, *to God even the father.*

For the first. The dignitie of all true beleeuers hath two heads; first, *They bee kings*, secondly, *priests*. They are called kings, not in regard of an earthly kingdome, for visually the condition of most beleeuers on earth is base and contemptible: but in regard of a spirituall kingdome, the kingdome of heauen, whereto the Lord giues them right, title, and interest, in, and by Iesus Christ. So our Saviour Christ speaketh to his disciples:

(a) *Ye are not little sheepe, it is your fathers will to giue you the kingdome.*

And againe, *Behold I giue unto you a kingdome.* Now the faithfull are kings in these respects; first, because by Christ they be lords and conquerours of all these enemies; sinne, Satan, the world, death, hell, and their owne flesh. Secondly, because in, and by Christ, they are partakers of the glory of Christs kingdome and saluation: for they receiue of Christ grace for grace, & so answerable glorie for glory, and felicitie for felicitie. Thirdly, because they bee made lords of all things in heauen and earth (except good Angels, and the church.) *All things are yours, whether it bee Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, whether things present, or to come, even all are yours, and you Christs.*

(b) *Cor. 1. 31.*

Quest. But if Christ bee king, and all his members kings, how doe they differ? *Ans.* In two points: First, Christ is the son of God by nature, and so a king by nature, hauing the right of the kingdom of heauen by inheritance: but the members of Christ are the sons of God by adoption in his sonne, so that our right to that kingdome is not by nature, but by grace. Secondly, Christ is an vniuersall king, ouer the Angels in heauen; the Church on earth, and all other creatures wheresoeuer; his regiment is absolute in the hearts and consciences of men, & he can by his word bind all things: but true beleeuers be not vniuersall kings, for they haue no superioritye aboue good Angels, and the Church. Neither are they absolute kings as he is, nor of themselves, but by Christ Iesus, and as they partici-

pate with Christ in his kingdome.

The second part of the dignitie of true beleeuers stands in this, That they bee priests consecrate and set apart by Christ, to the worship & seruice of God here in this life in spirit and truth; and in the life to come, to serue and praise him eternally. Christ hee is a priest, so are all his members; but yet there is difference. First, Christ hee is an eternall and reall priest of the new Testament, which offers vp a true, reall, and externall propitiatorie sacrifice to God the father for the sinnes of mankind. As for beleeuers, they are not reall and externall priests, but spirituall, offering vp spirituall sacrifice vnto God. As when any member of Christ giues an almes, hee offers a sacrifice to God, not a corporall sacrifice, though the thing giuen be a bodily substance; but it is euery way spirituall: for to offer a reall outward sacrifice in the new Testament is proper to Christ. Again, our Saviour Christ hee is a perfect priest, and offers vp a perfect sacrifice, but we beeing imperfect, do offer vp imperfect sacrifices, tainted, and blemished with sinne; yet accepted as perfect, for the worthinesse of Christs sacrifice.

The second point to be considered, is the time when beleeuers bee made kings and priests; namely, *in this life*. For as in the entrance into an earthly kingdome there bee degrees: First, to haue good right and title to it; secondly, to get possession of it, which is more than title only; & yet if a mans title be good, though he want possession, hee may bee called a king. So is it with Gods children, they haue the right giuen them of the kingdome of heauen in this life, and in that respect are kings. Forther, in the possession of a kingdome there bee two degrees: first, the entrance vpon some part; secondly, the full and perfect enjoying of all. Now euery true beleuer begins to enter possession of the kingdom of heauen in this life: for it stands (a) *in righteousness, joy, & peace* and they which haue these things in their hearts, haue the kingdome of God begun in them in this life. But the full fruition and perfect possession of this kingdome is reserved to be giuen at the end of this life, and at the day of iudgment. And as true beleuers be

(a) *Rom. 14. 17.*

kings in this world: so likewise bee they priests, in offering spirituall sacrifice to God, and dedicating and consecrating themselves to his seruice all the dayes of their life.

The third point is, the manner how true beleeuers become kings and priests: they are not such by nature, neither doth this dignitie come by descent in blood or birth-right, or by any other priuiledge they haue from man, but onely from Christ Iesus, who by diuine calling makes them spirituall kings and priests, like as vnder the law, by solemne election and ordination, some were made earthly kings and priests. Now in this calling of Christ, two things concur: First, Christ giueth his members right to his owne kingdome and priesthood: yet not so, that they can execute the regiment sustained by Christ, or perform the office of his priesthood; but because they haue right in part to these offices, and the benefit of them both redoundeth to them wholly. And this right they haue, is brought to passe in the couenant of the Gospell: wherein they are bound to beleue in God through Christ; and God is bound again to giue vnto them Christ with all his benefits: among which, these two must be accounted: for indeed, euery thing which belongs to Christ, as hee is mediator, is conveyed in some sort to euery true beleuer. Secondly, in this diuine calling, Christ endues all his members with gifts and graces, whereby they are enabled for the duties of spirituall kings and priests vnto God. For as Christ is annointed, so are all his members. So the Psalmist speaking of Christ saith, *He is annointed with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellows*, Psalm. 45. vers. 7. Therefore his fellows (that is beleeuers) are annointed with the same oyle, though in lesse measure. And Saint Iohn sayth; *You haue receiued the annointing*, 1. Iohn 2. vs. 7. *Yea, God himselfe chargeth wicked men, not to touch him annointed*, Psalm. 105. vs. 15. meaning not onely Patriarkes, Kings, and Prophets; but all true beleeuers, who are then annointed when they are endued with the gifts of the same spirit, in some measure, wherewith Christ in his manhood was filled above measure.

The fourth point: To whom hath he

made them kings and priests? *Ans. To God, euen the father*. This is added for speciall cause, to prevent that carnall libertie which mans nature might claime from this spirituall royalty: for men might say, If all beleeuers be kings, then may they liue as they list: but these words (vnto God) doe shew, that the right of their kingdome, with the offices of their priesthood, must all be referred to the honour and prayse of God, vnto whom they are made kings and priests.

Lastly, he addeth, *Euen his father*, by way of exposition, to shew more particularly to which of the persons they are first of all made kings & priests: for the title, God must not here bee taken absolutely for the diuine nature, but with restraint to the first person, the father: vnto whom all true beleeuers are made kings & priests in the first place, & from the father to the sonne, and from them both, to the holy ghost. And the first person in Trinitie is here named above the rest, not as being above them in degree or honor, for so they be equal: but because hee is the first in order, and the fountaine of the Godhead, which is conveyed from him to the Sonne, and from them both to the holy Ghost.

Thus much for the meaning of the words: Now follow sundry vses, from the consideration of these two dignities of beleuers. And first their kingly dignitie affordeth matter both of instruction and consolation.

Instruct. 1. Whereas all true beleeuers are made true kings in this life; hereby euery one that professeth Christian religion is taught, to carry himselfe as an enemy to all those that are of the kingdome of darkenesse: as namely to sinne, and Sathan, to the flesh, and the world, euen through the whole course of his life: for by calling, euery Christian hath title to the kingdome of heauen. What affinity then can wee haue with those that be both enemies of this kingdome, and of Christ himselfe, that made vs kings. Now, that wee may so carrie our selues, as enemies, we must doe these three things: First, haue care to keepe guard, and defend our selues, as kings against all our enemies, sinne, Sathan, our owne flesh; and the enticements of this world. As kings protect their kingdome,

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so must we labour to keep our souls and bodies, and euerie facultie and part of them, our wils, affections, thoughts, and inclinations, from the power of sin. *Hee which is borne of God, keepeth himselfe* (as with watch and ward) *that the euill one, that is Sathan, touch him not by the assaults of sinne*, 1. 1oh. 5. 18. Secondly, wee must make warre continually against Sathan, sinne, our owne flesh, against all our spirituall enemies, and all the enticements of the world: we must make no truce with them, because they will neuer bee reconciled vnto vs, so long as we haue interest vnto the kingdome of heauen: and if we yeeld to them, wee loose our kingly dignitie, & become their vassals, and bondslaves. Thirdly, we must labour to kill & destroy these our enemies as much as possibly we can, by that power wee haue from Christ our head, and like valiant kings seeke to haue the blood of these enemies, and from day to day strive to vanquish Sathan, his power and might, to ouercome the world, and to weaken our owne corruption.

Instruct. II. If in this life we be kings, then must wee become lords ouer our selues, and keep in subiection vnto God our wils and affections, and the secret thoughts and inclinations of our soules. We must not looke for rule ouer earthly kingdomes: but herein stands our kingdome in this world, That wee can subdue our corrupt affections, and keep our bodies and soules in obedience vnto God. If a man were prince ouer the whole earth, and yet could not rule himselfe, he were but a poore prince, nay he were no prince indeed. But though a man haue not so much as a foot of ground in this world, and yet can rule and master himselfe, his thoughts & affections, this man is a valiant prince, & one whome Christ hath consecrate to be king in heauen.

Instruct. III. Seeing wee be kings, we must do the dutie of Iudges: for to him that is a king belongeth soueraign iudgement. In the day of iudgement *the (a) Saint shall iudge the world, and Angels also*: but wee must bee Iudges in this world. And yet here wee can neither iudge men nor Angels, but wee must bee our owne Iudges. Wherefore as Iudges summon, arraigne, condemne, &c. so must wee examine our selues, call our selues to account,

and as guilty persons accuse & condemn our selues for our sins; acknowledging we bee worthy to bee cast into eternall damnation with the diuel & his angels: And withall plead for pardon, and approach to the throne of grace, & forgiveness in Christ: and in this we shew our selues vpriight spirituall Iudges, and by this meanes wee shall bee free from the iudgement to come.

Instruct. IIII. If wee bee kings by Christ, we must carry our selues as kings courageously, and constantly in the afflictions and miseries which we shall suffer for Christs sake. For herein among the rest stands the royaltie of a king, that he beares with valour and courage all the troubles which befall him. Hence it is, that Saint Peter exhorts *vs to ioyce in afflictions, because we are partakers of Christs sufferings*, 1. 1. Pet. 4. 13. and so are made conformable vnto him that was consecrate the prince of our saluation through afflictions, *Heb. 2. 10.*

Instruct. V. Seeing wee bee spirituall kings, wee must aboue all things labour and seeke to haue our part in the kingdome of Christ, and in his righteousness. A Christian must not haue his heart glued and fast tied vnto the things of this world, it is against his calling: but hee must so vse this world, as though he vsed it not. If a king should lay downe his crowne, and go and become a shepherd or of some manuell trade, all men would maruell at it. So it fareth with them that professe themselves to be Christians, & yet bend their wits and endeavors wholly for these worldly things, they doe as it were cast aside their kingly crowne, and abase themselves to slavish bondage. But we must euer after haue our hearts fixed in heauen, struing to come to our inheritance there.

Instruct. VI. Seeing all the true members of Christ be kings and princes: this should be an inducement to al backward persons to loue and embrace true religion. In these carelesse dayes Religion is counted preciousnesse, and the profession thereof made a matter of reproch. But this ought not to bee so, seeing that by it wee come to haue right and interest vnto the kingdome of heauen, and to bee lords of all creatures. And why should we not esteeme the gospell preached as a

most precious iewel, seeing that wee which are vassals of Sathan, and fire-brands of hell (as all men are by nature) become thereby the members of Christ, yea kings and princes to God? Yea verily, the consideration of this should make the ministers of the Gospell to ioy in their callings, and to take all paines to preach the word, seeing by it men become of vassals of Sathan, the true members of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom of heauen. In this world it is counted great honour to consecrate and establish one in an earthly kingdome: What a blessed and honorable thing then is this, to consecrate spiritual kings for the kingdome of heauen? And this is done, when by the word preached men are conuerted and brought to vnfeined repentance for their sins, and to true faith in Christ Iesus.

Thus much for the duties. Now follow the consolations to euery true beleuer onely. It is an heauie crosse, which breeds much anguish to the soule, to bee in pouertie and contempt among men; yet herein may the child of God stay his heart, and lessen his grieffe, by considering that euen in this state of miserie, hee is a king vnto God; though hee seeme base to the world, yet it appeareth not what he shall bee, for hee is heire to the kingdome of heauen. If a man bee in sicknesse, he must consider it is but Gods messenger, to call him out of this world to the full possession of the ioyes of his kingdome. If he bee in trouble of mind, hating his owne conscience tormented fearefully by Sathan with his sinnes; yet he must not dispaire, the Lord will giue him an happie issue: he must remember he is a king, and therefore shall one day haue full conquest ouer sinne, Sathan, & his own corruption, yea, ouer all his enemies whatsoeuer. If hee be in the heat of persecution turmoiled and tossed from post to pillar, which flesh and bloud cannot brooke: yet then hee must consider his holy calling to bee a spirituall king, whose proprietie it is in the most violent afflictions, euen vnto death it selfe (as Paul sayth) *to bee more than conquerour*, Rom. 8. 37. Lastly, in the very pang of death, when nature must needs be dissolved, and soule and bodie separated, then must the child of God remember, that

he is a king in Christ, and this will stay his heart against the feare of death; for herein shall hee see, that by death, as through a straight passage, hee shall enter into the full possession of his kingdome. And thus much in that wee are kings.

From the second dignitie of beleuers, which is to be priests vnto God, wee are likewise taught sundry duties.

First, *to teach and instruct one another*. It was the office of the priest vnder the law to teach the people the will of God. *The priests lips should preserve knowledge*, Mal. 2. vers. 7. And now vnder the Gospell not onely the minister, but euery true beleuer is a spirituall priest, and therefore ought *to teach, and admonish one another*. Col. 3. 16. When the Lord saith, *Touch not mine anointed, and doe my prophets no harme*, Psal. 105. 15. Hee calleth all his faithfull by the name of Prophets, because they ought to haue the knowledge of his will, and bee able also in due time and vpon iust occasion to teach the same to others, that so the Gospell of Christ may flourish. And as this dutie belongs to all men; so especially to gouernours, as parents and masters, they must shew themselves priests to their charges. *Abraham* did it, Gen. 18. *David* did it, *Prou.* 4. And *Bathsheba* did it, *Prou.* 31. And all must do it, that desire an holy generation to succeed after them. Wee teach them other things, why not religion?

Secondly, seeing wee bee priests, wee must pray vnfeinedly, not onely for our selues, *But (a) for all men*, especially the members of Christ. The priest in the old Testament must pray and make request, not onely for himselfe, but for the people also. And herein stands the praise of a Christian, to pray for his brethren. Hence it is that Paul saith, *Pray for all the Saints, and for me*, Ephes. 6. 18. *Moses* is highly commended for this dutie, especially when he *prayed for the Israelites, and stood before the Lord in the gap, to turne away his wrath*, Exod. 32. *Elias* for his power in prayer and prophesie, is called *the chariot & horseman of Israel*, 2. Kin. 2. 12. And this is recorded for the praise of *Hozabiah*, That when the people were vnprepared at the eating of the Passeouer, *Hee prayed to the Lord for mercy, & was heard*, 2 Chr. 39. 18. And so when wee find any commen-

Rom. 16. 20.

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commended in scripture for his gift in prayer, it is not so much for that he prayed diligently for himself, as for the whole Church of God.

Thirdly, being priests wee must offer spirituall sacrifice vnto God, that is, dedicate our selues, our souls, and bodies, & all that is in vs, our wit, learning, knowledge, and euery gift of body or mind to Gods seruice. That wee may doe all this to his glorie, wee must looke, that euery thing wee take in hand haue his beginning from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith vnfained, and be directed to a good end, to Gods glory principally, and the good of others, whom it may concerne.

Fourthly, we must be full of blessings. The priests in the old Testament *Numer. 6.* vsed to blesse the people: so must we, if wee bee Christians, because wee are spirituall priests. Wee must take heed of all cursed speaking, of slaughtering and backbiting, of swearing and forswearing; and giue our selues to blessed and gracious speeches to all men, and of all men, friends, or foes, *Rom. 12. 14.*

Fifthly, we must seeke to haue God for our portion: The Levites had no portion in the land of Canaan, but the tenthes only, *(a) The Lord was their portion.* So we being priests to God, must bee content with any estate in this world, for God is our portion. We must not seek too much after any inheritance on earth, for then wee carry not our selues like priests vnto God. The fauour of God in Christ must be the thing we long for, & therein must we reioyce.

To him be glorie and dominion, for euermore, Amen. These words are a thanksgiving to God for the former benefits of Christ bestowed on his church: Which *S. Iohn* putteth in before hee haue ended his record of the gracious workes of Christ for his Church, as it were interrupting himselfe, for the great desire, hee had to the glorie of God. Whereby wee are taught, that the consideration of Gods benefits towards vs, specially such as concerne the kingdome of heauen, should stirre vp our hearts to giue continual prayse and glory to God. This was *Dauids* affection, when he felt in his soul the pardon of his finnes, and therefore hee breakes out into this thanksgiving: *My soule praysse thou the Lord, & forget not all*

his benefits, *Psal. 103. 1.* And so did *Paul*, after the blessed memory of Gods mercie in his vocation, *1. Tim. 1. 17.*

Secondly, in this example of *Iohn* wee may learne, what is the true forme of giuing thanks to God, namely, to ascribe vnto him all power, glory, and absolute dominion for euermore. But alas, it is too too manifest, that our corrupt nature will not do this, but taking from god his due, bestoweth it on creatures, yea, on our owne selues. It is a matter of grace to know what is due to God, and to ascribe the same vnto him, and therefore we are charged to giue vnto the Lord glory & power, which in the next words hee calls the glory of his name, *Psal. 96. 7. 8.* So Christ he teacheth vs to ascribe all power, glory, might, and dominion to God, when wee say in the Lords prayer: *For thine is the kingdome, the power and glory:* that is, The kingdome of heauen is thine; all power in heauen and earth is thine, and therefore all glorie is thine; and from our hearts wee doe ascribe the same vnto thee.

Lastly, *S. Iohn* addeth, *Amen*, that is, *so be it.* Let all glorie and dominion bee giuen to Christ: which is the same he sayd before. Whereby he doth testifie his seruent affection, and strength of desire, after the glory of Christ, else he would not haue doubled his thanksgiving. And so should it be with vs, we should not freee in our thanksgiving for Gods benefits, but labour to haue our hearts & tongues to double the same, that thereby we may testifie our seruent and earnest desire after his praise and glory.

Verse 7. Behold, hee commeth with clouds, and many eye shall see him: yea, ones they which pierced him through: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail before him, *Euen so, Amen.*

These words are a declaration of the fourth action of our Saviour Christ towards his church: and that is, his second comming to iudgement, to iudge both quicke and dead. Wherein wee are to consider sundry points: first, this note of attention, *Behold:* secondly, the action of Christs comming it selfe, *Hee commeth:* thirdly, the manner how, *with clouds:* amplified by the manifestation thereof, *Euen so.*

eye shall see him, even they that pierce it have fourthly, the effect of his coming: *All tribes of the earth shall waile*: Fifthly, the conclusion of this narration, with two notes of assurance, *Excuse, Amen*, to confirme the second coming of Christ vnto all people.

I. point. *Behold*. First, S. *Iohn* beginneth this narration with a note of attention. The spirit of God is accustomed, when any thing is of especial weight and worth our carefull marking; to prefixe before it this note of attention: *Behold*, or such like. Hence then we are taught this speciall ducie, namely, often and euerie day earnestly and seriously to bethinke our selues of the second coming of Christ to iudgement. This consideration is a matter of great vse, for it is a notable meanes to begin and continue the conuersion of a sinner vnto God. When the Scribes and Pharises, obstinat enemies, came to the baptisme of S. *Iohn*, hee vsed this as a meanes to make them to turne, and beleue in Christ, saying: *Oh generation of vipers, who hath forewarned you that you should flee from the vengeance to come?* Math. 3. 7. So *Peter* vseth this same Argument, to bring the Iewes to repentance: exhorting them to turne, that their sinnes might be put away, when the day of refreshing (that is) the day of iudgement should come. Act. 3. 19. *Paul* perswades the Athenians to repentance, *Because there is a day appointed in which the Lord will iudge the world by Iesus Christ*, Act. 17. 30, 31.

Secondly, this note of attention serues to strike our hearts with a feare and reuerence of Christ Iesus: for it giues vs warning that hee shall come to bee our Iudge. We are touched with awe and reuerence toward earthly magistrates when we consider, that they haue authoritie to attach, apprehend, &c. to bring vs to their courts and assises. How much more should this worke in vs a reuerend awe towards Christ, when we consider, That one day wee must all bee brought before his Tribunall seat; and there bee iudged of him.

II. point. The coming of Christ himselfe, *He comes*: that is, Christ locally descendeth from the highest heaven, in his manhood; to that part of the world, where the clouds be, there to giue iudgement vpon all mankind quick and

dead. Here marke in what manner *Iohn* propounds his coming: hee sayth not, he shall come, but in the present time, *he commeth*. Whereby hee would teach vs: First, that this second coming of Christ is as certaine, as if it were now present. Secondly, that it is not long to, or far off, but will be quickly. Thirdly, that our duties, to consider of the coming of Christ, as of a thing present. This Saint *Iohn* learned, and so should wee by his example, for it is a matter of great vse. For hence wee are taught, to desire and doe that euery day, which we would desire and doe in the day of iudgement; and blessed is hee that attaineth hereunto.

Now that wee may come to the practise of this ducie, wee must dayly consider of the coming of Christ, not as a thing to be delayed or farre off, but as a thing present. Wee must euerie day call our selues to a reckoning and account, and perswade our selues this may bee the last day; and so shall we carry our selues euerie day, as wee would in the last day. Now, wee would wish at the day of iudgement, that wee did repent and beleue in Christ: and therefore euery day of our life, before the last iudgement come, wee ought to repent and beleue in Christ. If this ducie were practised, we should finde lesse corruption, and more grace in our hearts, and lesse sinne, and more obedience in our liues euery day than others; but grace is wanting, and sinne abounds, because this meditation takes no place in our hearts. Again, in that hee saith, *He comes*, meaning in respect of his manhood; hence wee gather, hee is absent from vs, in regard of bodily presences; and the heavens must containe him vntill the day of iudgement: But if Christ were alwayes bodily present in the Sacrament, hee could not bee said to come; but onely to manifest himselfe, being before present. And therefore the opinion of those, which hold the bread to be really Christs bodie, to bee in or about the bread of the Sacrament, is most false and frivolous; that against that article of our faith, wherby wee hold, That he comes from heaven onely at the last day, in regard of his manhood.

III. point. The manner of Christ's coming.

com-

comming, in two things: First, *that hee comes with cloudes*: Secondly, *that his comming is open, and visible to euery eye*.

Psalm 97

First, *with cloudes*, here S. Iohn speaketh after the manner of the Prophets, who to set out God in his maiesty and glory, say: *he comes with cloudes, rides on the wings of the winds*; as though he had said, he comes in exceeding maiesty and glorie. These words are added to make a distinction betweene the first and second comming of Christ. His first comming was in humilitie, borne of a poore virgin, entertained in a stable of an Inne: but his second comming is with glorie, maiesty, and dominion in the clouds. And the reason is, because he came first to be a redeemer, and a Saviour by his suffering; and therefore came in the state of a seruant. But his second comming is to be a Iudge of all men, yea of his enemies; and therefore he cometh with all might, maiesty, and glory, to shew himselfe king and lord of all.

The vses of this his second comming, are set downe in the 97. Psalme, to make the verie mountaines to tremble, to confound the wicked and vngodly, and to comfort the godly in that day.

Secondly, for his open appearance; *Euery eye shall see him*; hee shall come in maiesty and glorie: not secretly, but in visible shew to all the world. All men shall see him with their owne eyes: All I say, which were since the world began to his comming.

In these words hee toucheth three points: First, he taketh it here for granted, that euery man shall rise from death to life, though their death were neuer so strange, or neuer so long before. Secondly, that all men being raised againe, shall haue life, and motion, and their senses restored to them, as before they died. Thirdly, that all men, none excepted, shall come and stand before the tribunall seat of Christ, and there bee iudged of him in the clouds.

The consideration whereof is, First, an exceeding comfort to Gods children, in that they being dead, and rotten in their graues, shall rise, and receive their life, and motion, and see Christ their saviour, and iudge of all men. If a man when hee layeth him downe to sleepe,

should bee told, that when hee rose, hee should see his dead father and mother, or his dearest friends, whom he saw not of long before; this would bee a notable comfort to him, that now hee should enjoy them againe: but how satre greater comfort shall this yeld to all the godly, who haue beene dead and rotten in the graue, That they shall be raised vp, and not onely to meet with godly friends, but enjoy Christ Iesus the sonne of God, which is the friend of friends; who shall giue them not onely life and motion, but eternall life with his owne maiesty. This was Iohns comfort, that though he died, yet hee beleeued hee should see his redeemer with his eyes. And this should be our comfort against the feare of death, and last iudgement.

Secondly, this is a terror to the wicked, and to all impenitent sinners, that they shall (will they, nill they) be brought to the barre of Christs iudgement seate, & there looke on him who is their iudge whom they haue in their life contemned, and despised. And this consideration may serue to moue them to repentance which haue not begun to repent, and to labour to become the members of Christ; as also to increase and further repentance in them, who haue by Gods grace begun the same. It may be some do thinke when they die, all is done, and there is no further account to follow: but though wee lie rotten in our graues a thousand, or two thousand yeares; yet wee shall rise and looke vpon our iudge with our owne eyes. And if wee haue not in our life time repented, wee shall heare him with our owne eares, giuing the dreadfull sentence against vs, *Go ye cursed into euerylasting fire*. And therefore it is best for vs in this day of grace to preuent this danger, and now repent, and beleeue in Christ: that then we may rise with ioy, and stand with boldnesse before Christ Iesus. No doubt if wee were perswaded that wee should thus appeare, it would moue vs to repent.

Thirdly, *Euery eye shall see him*: that is, all men with their owne eyes shall looke on him. Hence it may bee gathered, that those who wanted their sight in this life, shall haue it then restored. It is granted of all Diuines, that the elect shall haue all their senses, and other defects restored,

restored; wherein they were wanting in this life: And it may also be added, that the wicked shall then have some of their senses restored, if they wanted the same in this life; as hearing, and seeing at the least: for the deafe shall heare, the blind shall see this Iudge. And this can be no glorie to them, seeing it is to increase their miserie: for the more senses they haue, the more punishment they shall feelee, because by sense wee apprehend miserie.

Even those which pierced him. Here is added a further euidence of Christs manifestation of his comming, and that for three cause. First, to shew that no power, or wisdom in the world, can free any one from his appearance. For if any could escape, in all likelyhood it would be those Iewes & Gentiles who prevailed most against Christ, and put him to death. But none of those can escape his iudgement: for *even they which pierced him, they shall see this Iudge*, and be summoned before his maiestie: For though they had power to kill him, yet none of them shall haue power to absent themselves from before his bar of iudgement at the last day.

Secondly, to shew the case of all wicked men: namely, that such woe and miserie shall befall them as they never once thought of. The Iewes and Gentiles which crucified Christ, neuer dreamed of this; that he whom they then put to a temporall death, should one day be their Iudge, and condemne them to eternall death, vnlesse they had repented.

Thirdly, to shew the ruffull & wofull estate of all impenitent sinners; they shall rise to iudgement, and haue their greatest enemy their Iudge, who will shew rigor vpon them, and iustice without all mercie: for this piercing of Christ is meant not onely of the Iew, which put him to death, but of al vngodly persons; because all such do by their sinnes, as with swords and speares wound him at the hart as the souldiers did. Impenitent sinners bee as the Iewes which crucified Christ; as *Judas* which betrayed him, and as the souldiers which goared his side: and vnlesse they now repent, they shall one day be iudged as his enemies.

Even they which pierced him. Out of these words some gather, that the bodie of

Christ hath still the wounds and scars, which were giuen him at his death, the print of the nayles in his hands and his feete, and that these shall be scene in him at the last day: adding withall, that it is no blemish to Christ to haue these, but rather an increase of his glorie. But this cannot be gathered hence, for though it be said, *I they shall see him whom they pierced*; yet it followeth not, that they shall see him as he was pierced: what though they see the person whom they wounded, shall they therefore see his wounds? Many shall see kings and queens whom they crowned in this world, but it followeth not, that therefore they shall weare their crownes. So we shall see our fathers and mothers, but not as fathers and mothers.

IV. point. The fruit and effect of his comming, especially in the wicked in these words: *And all tribes of the earth, shall waile before him.* Where *S. Iohn* speaks of the whole world according to the condition of the land of Canaan: for onely that part of the world was diuided into tribes. As in like case our Sauiour Christ setteth out the iudgement of the whole world, according to the state and manner of iudging the visible Church, *Mat. 25*. So that his meaning is, that they which repented not, of what nation soeuer, of what state, or condition soeuer they haue bene, shall waile, and mourne at that day. And hee addes a reason of this their mourning, in these words, *for him, before him, or ouer him*. That is, they shall waile, and lament with exceeding lamentation, because they beleueed not his word, but contemned him, and his doctrine, and therefore now they want all helpe to free them from the punishment of their vnbeleefe, & contempt of the Gospell: for this life is the only time of grace and mercie: afterwarde there is no worke, nor inuocation that can alter mans estate.

Hence then we are admonished, first, that in this world wee labour aboue all things to be reconciled to god in Christ, to get our sinnes pardoned, to beleue and embrace his holy word; and vnlesse wee attaine hereunto in this life, we shall waile eternally: for when the last day is come, there is no hope of help, no way to escape, no time of grace to repent. Remember

member the foolish virgins, that sought for oyle, when it was too late, and knocked when the doors were shut, *Math. 25*. But if by Gods mercie we can in this life get his loue and fauour in Christ, then shall wee enioy the same eternall: yea, at this dreadfull day to all the wicked, wee shall lift vp our heads, & our harts, when we shall see Christ comming to our full redemption, all teares shall bee wiped from our eyes, when the wicked shall crie and houle, woe & alas for euermore. The diuell knowing the worth of this admonition, will labour by all means to keep it from our hearts. But this shall bee our wisdom, betime to sue for grace, and so shall we defeat Sathan, and preuent eternall wailing.

Secondly, here see what an euill conscience is: It lieth asleepe here while a man liues, and neuer troubleth him, and so it may do in death also: but in the last day when he shall see his Iudge with his eyes, then it will stirre, it will torment him, it will attach, accuse, and condemne him, it will lay to his charge all his sinnes, his contempt of Christ and his word, his unbeliefe in the time of grace; and then it will breake his heart, being as good as a thousand witnesses to condemne him.

This should cause all men to labour to get a good conscience, washed and purged in the blood of Christ, which will not suffer vs to lie in any one sinne; and vpon our repentance will assure vs we be in the fauour of God: Which if it doe in this life, then will it neuer make vs to waile at the last day, but it will excuse vs, and make vs looke vp to our redeemer, and to reioyce in him. But take heed when thy consciencelieth asleepe, & accuseth not for thy sinnes, no not at death; that is an euill conscience which will awake at the day of iudgement to torment and condemne thee.

V. point. The meanes whereby hee confirmeth the certaintie of the second comming of Christ; that is, by a double note of asseueration: *Euen so, Amen*. One of these is taken from the Greekes, *Euen so*, the second from the Hebrews: *Amen*; being both as much as Amen, Amen, or verily, verily. In which phrase Saint *Iohn* teacheth vs, how to confirme the things wee auouch. There bee three wayes

whereby a thing may be auouched: First, by a simple and bare affirmation, or negation: Secondly, by an earnest asseueration: Thirdly, by an oath. Now *S. Iohn* vseth these two notes of assuring in this weightie matter of Christs second comming, saying, *Hee commeth, euen so, Amen*; that is, certainly, and without all doubt it is so. Hereby teaching vs, first, that an asseueration must not be vsed, but onely when the matter in hand is of great weight and moment. Here then we see that wretched is their practise, who vse to bind euery word with an oath; which is a degree aboue this asseueration. Yea, they also are here iustly reprooued, who in their ordinarie communication haue euery in their mouth some weightie asseueration. Our Sauour often vseth these words of asseueration, yet onely in matters of weight and moment, and when the hearers were to be moued to greater attention, and their hearts were to bee more fully sealed in some truth of great importance.

Secondly, by these asseuerations *Iohn* would teach vs to hold against the practise of Atheists, that the comming of Christ is most certaine and vndoubted. Which thing wee should more seriously obserue; because in our corrupt nature there is bred this false perswasion, That either wee shall not bee summoned to iudgement, or els, that Christs comming is farre off: like to the euill seruant, who saith, *My maister deferres his comming*: which euil seruant by nature is euery one of vs.

Thirdly, hereby *Iohn* giues vs to vnderstand one speciall note and marke of the child of God: namely, to desire and long after vnfaignedly the second comming of Christ to iudgement: for as these words be an asseueration; so withall they containe a most earnest desire: *Euen so, Amen*, as if hee should say by way of answer to the proclaiming of his comming, *Lord grant it bee so, yea Lord, let it bee so*. Hence it is that *S. Paul* describes all those, who must receiue the crowne of righteousness, by this propertie, that they loue his appearing. *2. Tim. 4. 8*. As for the vngodly it is not so with them, they (being not iustified nor sanctified, and so not reconciled to God in Christ) cannot loue this appearing. Nay they could with

with all their heart there were no hell, nor last iudgement. And by this one note wee may well iudge of our estates; for if from our hearts we desire and long for this second comming to iudgement, and wish he would *come* ^(a) *quickly*, then it is a certaine token and signe wee be reconciled to God in Christ, and shall receive the crowne of righteousness. But if as yet we feele not this longing & hungering desire in vs, then wee must suspect our selues, and labour every day to feele it: for it is the desire of the Saints to say, ^(b) *How long Lord. And with Iohn, Euen so. Amen.*

(a) Reuel. 22.
20.

(b) Reuel. 6. 10.

Vers. 8. I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the end saith the Lord, which is, which was and which is to come, even the Almighty.

After Saint Iohn had described Christ at large in the former verses: he bringeth him in speaking of himselfe by a figure, as may appeare by this clause (*saith the Lord*.)

The end and scope of these words in this verse is to confirme that which was before spoken of Christ, being a prooffe and reason thereof, after this manner to be conceived. Hee which is the beginning and the end of all, &c. he is sufficient to be a king, priest, and prophet to the Church, and is both able and willing to bestow on them all blessings which serue for their good. The first part of this argument is omitted, the second part is contained in this eight verse: But *I am the beginning, and the end, and therefore I am sufficient &c.*

In this eight verse are three points concerning Christ. First, *hee is the beginning & the end*. Secondly, *hee is was & is to come*. Thirdly, *hee is Almighty*. For the first: that Christ is the beginning, & the end, Saint Iohn expresseth by a comparison taken from the Greeke alphabet: & it standeth thus. As in the A, B, C, of the Grecians, *Alpha* is the first letter, and therefore the beginning of all the letters; and *Omega* is the last, and therefore the end of all the letters. So (saith Christ) *I am the beginning of all things that are, and the end of all things.* The first part of this similitude is in these words, *I am Alpha & Omega*, that is, *I am an Alpha and*

Omega. The second part in these words, *The beginning and the end*.

From this and such like manner of speaking, the Papists gather, that it is lawfull to worship God in a strange language: And that the Scriptures are to be read and delivered to the people in an vnknowne tongue. But their collection is frivolous: For though the vnlearned English man know not what Alpha and Omega is: yet the Churches to whom this booke was written, being Grecians, knew generally what was meant hereby.

Again, though the spirit of God vseth here and there a strange word or phrase, yet wee may not follow that practise in the whole sentence and worship of God, whereby neither the word, nor prayer, should be vnderstood of the people, as the Papists do.

I am the beginning Christ is said to bee the beginning for two causes. First, because he was the very first of all things: there was nothing before him; hee had a being when all creatures were not; then was he the same that he is now: and for this saith Saint Iohn Chap. 1. vers. 1. *In the beginning was the word*, that is, the sonne of God, hee had his being, and subsisting when all other creatures wanted it, and began to be.

This proueth the eternitie of Christ, because hee had his being before any creature; he was a substance and essence begotten of the father before all worlds, not created as other creatures are, or made of any other.

Secondly, hee is called the beginning: because he giueth a beginning to all creatures: For all things which were created and had a being, were created by him, and had their being from him. So saith the Apostle, *All things are from him, and for him*, Colos. 1. 16. And hence wee learne, that when wee go about any business in word or deed, wee must begin it with inuocation in the name of Christ: for Christ he giues the beginning, and proceeding to all things. And without his helpe wee cannot haue in any thing good successe.

Secondly, the same Christ is *the end* of all things, and that for two causes: First, because he is the last of all things, and after him is nothing in subsisting, and be-
ing

ing: for all creatures if they were left to themselves would come to nothing. And whereas some creatures be eternall, it is not of themselves, but by him; and from him which is the end. But though they all should come to nothing; yet Christ would remaine the same hee was for euer, namely, the eternall sonne, and word of the father. This then should make vs with full purpose of heart to cleave vnto Christ in all things; if wee would enioy eternall happinesse: for without him is nothing but changing; & vnlesse we haue our stablesse from him, we cannot but come to an end.

Secondly, hee is *the end*; because all things in heaven and earth were made to serue him: *For him were all things created*, Coloss. 1. 16. that is, to serue for his glory and praise.

The second thing here said of Christ is this, *Which is, was, and is to come*. These words were expounded in the fourth verse, where the very same are affirmed of the father. The meaning is, that Christ is in present a perfect substance, and essence or being, subsisting in, by, and from himselfe, and such a substance he was in time past; from all eternitie, and such as shall continue in time to come for euermore.

Hence we learne three things. First, That the second person in the Trinitie is consubstantiall with the father; that is, of one and the same substance & nature with him. The reason is, because there can be but one only substance or essence, which hath being in and by it selfe; and from it selfe alone: neither can wee conceiue how there should be two, or more, but onely one; as there cannot bee two eternals, or two infinites, two omnipotents and absolute lords, which haue nothing one of another. Now in the fourth verse it is said of the father, *That hee is a substance of himselfe, in himselfe, and from himselfe alone*. And here the selfesame thing is said of the second person, the son. And therefore he is of the very same substance with the father: for though they be distinct persons in the godhead; yet they haue but one & the same substance; one and the same diuine nature; and godhead.

Secondly, hence we may gather, That Christ is *God of himselfe*: because as the father is, was, and shall be; so the son is,

was, and shall be; and that in the same respects: So that as the father is God of himselfe, and from none other, so the son is God of himselfe, and from none other. Indeed as he is the sonne, the second person, so he is of the father, and hath his being from him by eternall generation: but as he is God, hee is consubstantiall with the father, and coequal with him, & hath his essence of, and in himselfe alone. And the same is to bee affirmed of the holy ghost; as he is the third person, hee proceeds from the father and the son, but as hee is God, hee is of himselfe, and from none other.

Thirdly, hence we learne, That Christ is coeternall with the father, beeing euertlasting as the father is, and euerie way coequal, hauing the same attributes of the godhead that the father hath.

The third point touching Christ is, that he is *the Almighty*. There is in God, and so in Christ, a double power: First, a Potentiall; secondly, an Actuall power. Potentiall is that, whereby hee can doe many things more than euer hee did, or will doe: as hee could raise children to Abraham of the stones, but hee would not; he could haue deliuered Christ from death, but he would not. Now Christs omnipotency is not to be vnderstood of his potentiall power here principally, but rather of his actuall power, whereby he bringeth to passe without let and impediment whatsoever hee decreeth, willeth, or promisseth.

From this omnipotencie of Christ ariseth a double comfort to his Church: First, That whatsoever hee hath promised in his Gospell, is *yes and Amen*: that is, shall bee brought to passe effectually without stop and let, as assuredly as hee promised it. Now Christ hath promised in his Gospell to all penitent sinners remission of finnes, mortification, iustification, and life euertlasting; every one whereof, shall in due time bee done to euery true beleuer, which is a singular comfort to them; for all men and angels cannot giue one of these to any one man: but Christ hee is omnipotent, and hee both can and will effect them all to his elect.

The second comfort that Christ both can and will giue his Church, sufficient security and protection through all the mi-

miseries of this life: hee can defend and guard her against all the furie and malice of Satan, and all her enemies: hee is above them, and can bridle their might when and how he pleaseth.

Hence also, that Christ is Almighty, we are taught two duties. First, vnder the crosse, and in tribulation to humble our selves vnder his mightie hand: for it is he which correcteth vs, who is almighty, able to do what he list, and more than he will, resistance or repining will doe vs no good. Secondly, this should moue vs to performe heartie obedience vnto Christ in all things, both in our generall & particular callings to walke vprightly before him: for he is Almighty, and seeth whether we walke sincerely before him, or not, if we do not, hee is able to punish vs. By this Argument God persuadeth Abraham to walke vprightly before him, because he is Almighty, able to correct & destroy those which refuse to obey him, *Gen. 22. 7. 1.*

Verſ. 9. I Iohn, your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Iesus Christ, was in the Isle called Patmos, for the word of God, & for the witnessing of Iesus Christ.

Hetherto wee haue entreated of the Preface of this booke, containing the title and inscription thereof. Now from this ninth verse, to the end of the third chapter, is contained one of those seven visions which were shewed vnto Iohn, & are set downe in this booke. In this first vision two things are to bee noted: first, the circumstances; secondly, the parts thereof. The circumstances in the ninth and tenth verses; the parts from thence to the end of the third chapter.

The circumstances of this vision are foure: first, the person to whom this vision was shewed, namely, Iohn: The second, the place where, at Patmos: The third, the manner how it is propounded, It was deliuered vnto him *being banished in the spirit*: The fourth, the time when, *on the Lords day*.

For the first: Iohn is the person to whom this vision befall; who doth therefore name himselfe, to shew, that it was giuen him of the Lord: for as the Lord hath his visions and revelations (as hath

bee said) so the diuill hath his: but they may bee distinguished by the persons to whom they be giuen. God giueth his visions not to all men, but vnto those which are most fit for them; such as bee most holy men for life, endued with exceeding gifts of God, as knowledge, wisdom, constancie, zeale, pietie, and religion. So in the old testament he deliuered not them to all, but to his seruants the Prophets, men of singular gifts and graces, and of exceeding holinesse & pietie. Indeede the Lord revealed some particular things by wicked men, as by Balaam and Caphar, but they neuer knew what those things meant which were shewed vnto them. It is a proprietie belonging to the seruants of God, to receiue a vision, and to know the same to their comfort. And for both these was Iohn thoroughly qualified, he was a man of exceeding holinesse of life (for Christ loued him) and of singular and rare gifts, full of zeale, loue, and pietie, and also had the knowledge of this vision made knowne vnto him: but the diuill maketh no such choise; his visions befall men: which are Hereticks, wicked notorious sinners, who haue no such rare and speciall gifts as the other haue: so that wee must esteeme of this, as a singular gift of God to his own Apostle S. Iohn.

Now Iohn having named himselfe to bee the receiuer of this vision: for the greater credit hereof hee describes himselfe by two modest tearmes: First, *A brother*: secondly, *A companion*: First, he calls himselfe *their brother*, that is, of them who by faith were all members of the mysticall body of Christ. For the church of God is a family, whereof God the father is head and house-holder, Iesus Christ is the elder brother, and all beleaguers are fellow brethren in & by Christ, being by faith the adopted sons of God, members of that family, and brethren each to other.

By this title (*your brother*) first hee setteth out his humility, and great modesty. For hee was a man at that time about all men which liued, in regard of his gifts and holinesse of life; he was the last Apostle, and had Apostolicall authority, being a most zealous and constant professor, yet he calleth himselfe a brother to all true beleaguers, and maketh himselfe but

but equall with them, though they were farre inferior to him. And so should we esteeme better of our brethren than of our selues, and make our selues inferior to them.

Secondly, by this title wee see hee had his heart full of brotherly loue to all the members of the church of Christ, hee loued them as brethren. So wee are bound to loue all men, even our enemies, as they be of the same flesh with vs, but those that bee of the same faith and religion with vs, to these especially should wee shew our loue and affection. So Paul saith to the Christian Romans, *Be affectionate to loue one another with brotherly loue*, Rom. 12. 10. And great reason: for beleeuers are linked each to other with the neereft bond; they haue the same father, which is God, the same redeemer, the same faith, hope, baptisme, and the same benefit by Iesus Christ, his death and obedience.

But this dutie is not practised; there be that call themselves brethren, who (as I say faith) *hate them that trouble at the word; and mocke them even for the profession of the same religion, whereby they thinke to be saved*. If any seeine to make more conscience of their waies than others, they are reuiled & hated for the name of Christ; which ought not to bee, for among all true Christians should bee brotherly loue.

The second title, *Companion, or copartner* in three things; in tribulations, in the kingdome, and in the patience of Christ. Hee calls himselfe *Copartner* with them in tribulations for two causes. First, because at that time when hee wrote this vision, the whole church was in persecution and tribulation vnder that cruell tyrant *Dominian*, about fourescore or an hundred yeares after Christ: who banished *Iohn* into Patmos: where he was not vnmindful of the afflictions of the church whereof hee was a member: and therefore calls himselfe a partner with them in affliction.

By which he shewes what is that state of Gods church in this world, namely, to be vnder the crosse: and the members thereof must not bee companions of peace and ease, but copartners in affliction and tribulation. And therefore

Christ teacheth those which will bee his

Disciples these lessons. First, to deny themselves, to take vp his crosse daily & to follow him. And because of this estate, the church in this world is called *The Militant Church*, being in continuall fight against the diuell and his instruments. The consideration whereof is of speciall vse: For we in this land haue had peace and quietnesse for many yeares without persecution, which we must acknowledge for a speciall blessing vouchsafed to vs for this end; that now in the time of peace wee might prepare our selues against the day of triall. For seeing the estate of the church is to be vnder afflictions; wee are all in dutie bound to waite continually when God will call vs out to suffer for his sake. No man can define the time, or the maner of our triall: but yet that it will come wee must resolue; because of the vsual estate of the Church. God hath for a long time sent forth labourers into his haruell, whereby no doubt many sheaues are gathered in to the Lords barne. Now after this long gathering there will come a day of fanning: The Lord will take into his hand the fanne of affliction, and put it into his corne, and thereby try the chaffe from the wheat. It stands vs therefore in hand to prepare our selues in this time of peace, that wee may bee found good corne in the Lords sieue, and not chaffe which must bee cast into vnquenchable fire.

Secondly, hee calls himselfe their *copartner in affliction*: because his pitifull heart was moued with the bowels of compassion, towards all his fellow members; when hee remembered their persecution; and affliction vnder the cruell tyrant *Dominian*. And the same affection should be in euery one of vs towards the poore afflicted seruants of Christ: seeing they bee our fellow members, wee should haue a fellow-feeling with them, weeping with them that weepe, and shew our compassion in pittying them. If the foote bee pricked, the head sloods, the eye beholds and lookes on it, the finger puls it out, the hand applies the plaister, the other foote is readie to runne for helpe, the tongue to aske for counsell, & all the members are readie to afford their mutuall helpe in pittie and fellow-feeling: so when any members of the church

church suffer affliction, bee pricked with persecution for Christs cause; then should we as members of the same body, bee ready to doe all the helpe wee can to them, especially in shewing our fellow-feeling with them.

The second thing wherein hee is this copartner is, *in the kingdom of Christ*, that is, the kingdom of heaven. Where observe that hee placeth fellowship in affliction, before companion in the kingdom: to give vs to vnderstand, that through afflictions & crosses for Christs sake, is the ready way to this kingdom. It is that way which is beaten and trodden by the Prophets, Apostles, and the Saints of God: as the Apostle saith,

(a) *Through manifold tribulations wee must enter into heauen.* And, *this (b) momentane*

affliction causeth to vs an infinite weight of glorie; not by deserving it, but by shewing the plaine way thither. Whereby we are taught not to thinke it hard, when trials do befall vs, but rather to count it a good thing, yea exceeding great gladnesse, when any affliction doth befall vs for Christs sake: for hereby wee are brought like wandring sheepe into that beaten path which leadeth to heauen. Nay, we must rather maruell when wee professe the Gospell, and haue no affliction; then we may (c) feare we be out of the way, seeing *the Lord afflicts every child which is his.*

Thirdly, hee is *Copartner in patience*: which hee addeth, because it is a most worthy vertue, whereby we are made able to perseuer in affliction till wee come to heauen. Afflictions are the beaten way, heauen is our ioyfull end, patience is the meane to make vs goe on til wee come thither. *What soeuer things are written, are written for our learning, that wee through patience and comfort in the Scriptures might haue hope.* Rom. 15. 4. Where true hope to come to heauen is obtained by patience, which maketh a beleeuers to goe on in suffering till hee come to life eternall. There is much fruit in the good ground, but not brought forth without patience, & the true beleuer is saued by hope in this world, yet cannot come to heauen without patience, *Iam. 5.* for thereby hee must possesse his soule.

Now because men will say, patience is an hard matter, and so are discouraged

from seeking for it; therefore to set an edge on their desire, he addes, *It is the patience of Christ*; & it is so called, either because he commands it, or because it is his gift, and cometh from the spirit of Christ; or chiefly because he himself suffereth in his members, & as their miserie & suffering is his, so is their patience. The consideration whereof is a singular motive to induce every child of God to patience, in bearing the crosse for Christ his sake: for they haue Christ their fellow sufferer, he takes part with them, & puts vnder his shoulder: Who would not then be content to suffer with patience? And thus much of the branches of his fellowship severally.

Now consider them jointly, and they containe a notable description of the communion of saints, which is a speciall article of our faith, standing in 3. things: In tribulation, In the kingdom of heauen, And in patience. And marke well, that this communion begins in tribulation, therein we must be partners, and that with patience, before wee come to haue fellowship in the kingdom of heauen. That man therefore that hath afflictions laid on him, must beare them patiently; and when the members of Christ are vnder the crosse, he must in tender compassion be touched with their miseries: and when he doth truly feelee in his heart this Christian patience and compassion, then may hee assure himselfe hee is entred into this communion, & shall vndoubtedly with all Saints bee partakers of the ioyes of heauen. But if patience & compassion bee wanting, wee perswade our selues in vaine of this communion: and therefore let vs strive against impatience, & against the deadnesse & hardnesse of our hearts; that we may neither murmur against God in our owne afflictions, nor yet want compassion towards our brethren that any where suffer affliction for the name of Christ. Thus much for the circumstance of the person,

Was in the Isle called Patmos. In these words is the second circumstance, namely, the place where this vision was giuen to *Iohn*. This Patmos is one of those Islands, which the Geographers call Sporades, lying in the West part of Asia the lesse, neere to the churches to whom *Iohn* writ, & by the sea commonly called the

(a) *Act. 14. 13*

(b) *1. Cor. 4.*

17.

Iam. 1. 3.

(c) *Heb. 12. 8.*

Math 13.

the Egean sea. This Island was a small, base, and poore Island, little or neuer a whit inhabited.

Saint *Iohn* had his vision not at Ierusalem, at Antioch, or Rome, but in Patmos, a base, poore, and little inhabited Island. By this we see, that in the new Testament there is no respect of one place about another, in regard of Gods presence, and our fellowship with him, hee doth as well manifest himselfe to *Iohn* by this vision in Patmos, as to other his prophets and Apostles in Ierusalem the holy citie. In the old Testament there was difference of places in regard of Gods solemne worship and presence; as the Lord shewed his presence, and tied his worship especially to his Tabernacle & Temple at Ierusalem. This *Daniel* sheweth by his gesture in prayer: for being in captiuitie, when hee prayed in his chamber, *He opened the window* which was towards the Temple at Ierusalem, and turned his face thitherward. But now in the new Testament, that difference of place is abolished in respect of Gods worship.

And therefore *Paul* willeth, *That men pray euery where, lifting up pure hands vnto God*: and so for all the duetie of religion we must thinke the like.

I. Then away with Popish pilgrimage to churches and chappels of Saints, or to their reliques. This is meere superstition: for God is present euerie where, and a man that will worship God in spirit and truth, may haue fellowship with him in one place as well as another.

II. Also this may serue to correct a false conceit which many haue of our churches and chappels: for when they come to a dwelling house, they thinke it not their duetie, there to humble themselves, to kneele downe, and call vpon God: but if they come into a church or chappell neuer so often, vpon ordinarie affaires they fall downe to prayer. The reason is, because they thinke these places bee more holy, and God more present there, and they shall sooner be heard in them than in their common houses: which is vntrue: for in the new Testament all such diuersitie of place is abolished in regard of Gods seruice and presence: the dwelling house is as holy as the church. Indeed churches must bee maintained, because in them the people

may more orderly and conueniently meet together to serue God publickly in the word and prayer: for which time all due reuerence must be obserued in them: but we must not thinke that they are more holy than other places.

More particularly, in this circumstance of place note two things: First, by what meanes *S. Iohn* came thither: Secondly, to what end, and for what cause. The meanes was *banishment* by the emperor *Domitian*: the cause was, *for the word of God*.

For the first, hee came and abode in Patmos, being *banished thither for the Gospels sake*. In this his banishment consider many excellent things: First, Saint *Iohn* was a most worthy Apostle, endued with rare gifts, a singular maintainer of the Gospell, and a famous founder of the church of God, and chiefe pillar thereof in those dayes when he wrote this book: and for this cause most hated of the cruel persecuter *Domitian*, and of the Romans. And yet obserue, That whereas many other true Christians were put to the sword, *S. Iohn* is not, but escapeth by banishment. The cause of this was Gods special providence, by which he reserved him for the benefit of the church, that he might receiue this Reuelation, and commit it to writing, for the perpetuall good of all his children. And so though *Domitian* was a cruell tyrant, and wanted no malice towards *Iohn*, yet he could not kill him, God overruled him, that he did but banish him, and that into such an Island, wherein hee might quietly receiue these visions, and pen the same for the good of the church. By this we see the great care and providence of God ouer his church, that he doth bridle and overrule the cruel minds and might of bloudie persecutors; that they cannot for their hearts doe any thing, but that which serueth for Gods glorie, and the good of his church, though they intend the contrarie. For *Domitian* intended onely the hurt of *Iohn*, yet see, by his banishment into that Isle, hee had fit place to receiue these visions for the good of the church. So in the death of Christ, the Iewes and Gentiles, and all the people banded themselves together, to put Christ to death, & the diuel he labored to stirre them on to practise their intended malice. Yet the ouerruling pow-

er of God, who bringeth light out of darkenesse, directeth and ordereth this their malice and wicked practise to the most excellent worke that euer was, even the redemption of mankind. So *Iosephs* brethren intended no such deliuerance as God wrought by him, in selling their brother. This consideration should comfort all Gods children in the time of any outward distresse, euen the remembrance of Gods ouerruling hand.

Preces & Labores arma Christianorum.

Secondly, in that *Iohn* went into banishment, when it was so appointed, wee learne, That when we are oppressed and persecuted by tyrants for Christs sake, we must not make resistance, or offer violence, but suffer all iniuries with patience: for as one saith truly, *The Christians weapons in persecution, are only prayers & tears.* And Saint *Iohn* often in this booke addeth this conclusion, after the foretelling of persecution, *Here is the patience of Saints*, shewing that patience must be the complete armour against all our bloodie enemies.

Thirdly, here also obserue, That *Iohn* came into this Island, not of his own accord, as chusing a solitarie life to bee the most happie state of perfection, but by violence and constraint. For if hee had come into it voluntarily, being little or not inhabited, hee could not haue done the duty of his Apostleship in preaching the Gospell, and laying the foundations of the church. This then confuteth the Monkish life, which is no life of holy perfection (as Papists call it) but of glorious superstition and flat impietie before God: for hereby they forsake their callings, and vterly disable themselves to do those duties which God requireth of them in church, commonwealth, or familie.

Fourthly, whereas *Iohn* being banished, receiued his visions in a barren and base desolate place: we see, that those which honour God shal be honoured of God, euen then when men seeke most to disgrace them: for what greater disgrace could they haue put vpon *Iohn*, than to banish him into so base an Island; Yet because it was for Gods glory, euen then doth the Lord appeare vnto him, and honour him much in reuealing vnto him these visions. So when *Ioseph* was sold of his brethren, and most dishonoured of

them; then did God exalt him most of all. The same may be said of *Daniel* in Babylon, whom God did most aduance when his enemies sought his greatest ruine: and the same is true of all Gods children, Them which honour God will he honour.

II. point. The cause for which hee came into this Isle, is expressly set downe, *for the word of God*: that is, because he was a publisher and preacher of the word of God; for the performance of which dutie he was banished: By which wee may note, That all naturall men (as *Domitian* and his court, and all the Gentiles, without Gods speciall calling) doe beare a deadly hatred towards Gods word. For *S. Iohn* was a most worthy Apostle, a famous man for gifts, a singular preacher of the word of God; yet is hated, nay banished, not for his owne cause, but for the word of God. This hatred hath appeared in the heathen emperors, by their bloudie persecutions against the preachers and professors of this word: and yet though men hate it naturally, the same word winneth them, and taketh place in their hearts for their conuersion, and causeth them to loue it: so as successuely it hath bene spread ouer all the world. Which shews against the Atheist, That the word taught by the Prophets and Apostles, is indeed the true word of God, not the inuention of man: for mans word being hated, cannot win vnto it him which hateth it: but the word of God preuaileth by grace in the hearts of those who hate it by nature, which it could not doe, vnlesse there were in it some diuine power.

Againe, seeing *Iohn* was banished for Gods word, all ministers are to cast their accounts, and make this reckoning, that they may and must suffer trouble & persecution, yea, sometime banishment it selfe, for the Gospels sake, if they will bee faithfull. For that which besell the principall founders and chiefe builders of the church, cannot bee auoided of them which are ordinary ministers, if they will be faithfull. Christ acquainteth his disciples with this, telling them, *That they are* Luk. 6. 26. *euil accursed, when all men speake well of them.* Let none therefore thinke it strange at this day, if for well doing, they heare and receiue euill: nay, let them

fear

fear the curse, when all men praye them.

And for the witnessing of Iesus Christ.

Here Iohn doth note more specially the cause of his banishment, to wit, for testifying the hystorie & doctrine of the gospel, the summe whereof is this, That Iesus Christ, the sonne of Marie, is the sonne of God & redeemer of all that beleue in him to the iustification of life. This testimonie S. Iohn puts down, to giue vs to vnderstand,

what part of Gods word that is, which is most hated of the world: & for the preaching wherof Gods ministers are persecuted and banished, to wit, the Gospel of Iesus Christ especially: for the law is in part naturall, but the gospel is supernaturall, and to mans reason absurd; for the preaching whereof, men in all ages haue bene persecuted. The reason hereof is this, God in the beginning made a covenant with man, promising, *That the seed of the woman should breake the serpens head.*

Gen. 3.

Now the Gospel is that glad tidings, wherein is declared, that this promised seed is come; who hath indeed bruised the head of the serpent. Hereupon the diuell maligneth the gospel about all parts of Gods word, & accordingly hath laboured by all meanes to suppress the same; partly by persecution, as he did in the first three hundred yeres after Christ; and partly by bringing into the church damnable heresies, which did destroy the gospel by deprauing the natures and offices of Christ, when by outward violence he could not preuaile.

Now seeing the diuell and his instruments do thus hate the gospel, & labour to extinguish it: we on the contrary must labour to know, and to beleue, to loue and embrace the gospel, that so we may vphold and maintaine the same.

Vers. 10. *And I was vanished in the spirit on the Lords day, and heard behind mee a great voyce, as it had bene of a Trumpet.*

In this tenth verse are set downe the third and fourth circumstances of this vision. The third is the maner of receiuing and giuing this reuelation to Iohn, namely, *in a trance.* The fourth is the time when it was giuen, *on the Lords day.*

Touching the manner, it is noted in

these words: *I was in the spirit.* That is, I was by the mightie and extraordinarie worke of the spirit of God cast into a trance. That this is to bee so expounded, appeareth by comparing this phrase with the like in the whole prophesie of Ezechiel, who vseth to say, *I was in the spirit*, when he expresseth and signifieth that hee was cast into a trance, and therein receiued some vision by the spirit.

To vnderstand this the better, consider two things: first, what a trance is: secondly, the end of it. First, *a trance is an extraordinarie worke or action of Gods spirit.* We must not thinke that trances come from the vertue of the starres, nor from the constitution of mans bodie, or by the strength of imagination, as some haue fondly thought: but they are wrought by the holy ghost. Secondly, it is not euery worke of the holy Ghost, but an *extraordinarie worke*, above the order of nature. It is also powerfull and mightie, wherein the whole man, both in bodie and mind is altered: which Saint Iohn here expresseth, saying, *I was in the spirit.* This extraordinarie worke of the spirit consisteth in two actions; one vpon the bodie, the other vpon the mind. First, in procuring a trance, the spirit of God casteth the bodie of man into a dead sleepe; whereby all the senses, both inward and outward, are benumbed: so Genes. 15. 12. when God renewed his covenant with Abraham, hee casteth him into an *heauie sleep*: that is, into a trance, wherein all his senses were benumbed; onely his mind was waking. The action of the holy ghost on the mind is, to draw it from fellowship with the bodie, and all the senses, to haue a neere fellowship with God, that so the spirit of God may enlighten it with diuine light, that it may vnderstand the things which are reuealed to it: as we may see in other extasies and trances of the Prophets and Apostles. As in that of (a) Peter, when he saw the visions of beasts cleane & vncleane. And thus wee see what a Trance is, namely, *an extraordinarie powerfull worke of the spirit vpon the whole man, casting the bodie into a dead sleepe, and making the mind fit to receiue the things which are reuealed vnto it of the Lord.*

(a) Act. 10. 11

What a trance is.

II. point. The end of trances. God

E iij

for

for two causes reuealeth his will in traunces vnto his seruants, as to *Iohn* in this place. First, that they might know, that the things reuealed were not inuented of themselves, but giuen of God. *Iohn* herein had no vse of his bodily senses, he neither heard, saw, nor felt, but they were asleepe. And therefore the vision must needs be from God, and the glory thereof wholly his.

Secondly and chiefly, that the things reuealed might take the deeper impression in the vnderstanding: for the mind being freed from fellowship with the bodie, and not hindered by any phantasies of the senses (they being all asleepe, and quiet) doth then most liuely and sensibly apprehend and retaine the impression of things reuealed. Here then we see the great care of God, that his seruants might thoroughly vnderstand, certainly beleue, and constantly keepe in memorie the things hee deliuered vnto them. The like care he shewed in reuealing his will to all his former Prophets, he would not haue their minds troubled with the fellowship of the bodie, nor hindered of the senses inward or outward; but wholly taken vp for the seruice of his spirit. And there is good reason of this: for if they must faithfully teach Gods will to others, to make them know and vnderstand, to beleue & remember the same: is it not necessarie that they themselves should thoroughly vnderstand, soundly beleue, and firmly keepe in memorie whatsoeuer God reuealeth?

This dealing of the Lord for this end with his holy Prophets, teacheth vs that the ordinarie ministers of the gospel at this day ought to imploy themselves with all care and diligence, that they may thoroughly vnderstand the will of God in his word, and withall beleue it soundly, and remember it carefully. Wee must not now looke for traunces and visions, as they had, but wee must vse continuall studie in the word, which is the ordinary means to come vnto this knowledge. This dutie concerneth all students in diuinitie, and all others which desire a good vnderstanding in the word of God. And for their furtherance herein they must haue principall care to search into the text of Scripture thoroughly: thereby shall they best conceiue the pro-

per meaning of the holy ghost, and with greater facilitie keepe the same in memorie. For one faith truly, That euerie good minister should bee a good text man. Whereby is descriced a common fault of many students: who rather imploy themselves in the auncient writings of men, than in the word of God: nay, many spend their best time in the base writings of wicked & hereticall monks and friers. It cannot be denied, but many of the fathers were worthy members of Gods church: but if the fountaine be left, the ministerie will soone bee tainted with the filthy puddles of mens inuentions.

Again, in this dealing of God with *Iohn*, we may obserue the truth of Christs saying, *to him that hath, it shall be giuen.* For Mark. 4. 24. though *Iohn* was endued with rare knowledge and singular gifts, yet the Lord addeth more knowledge to his former. The Lord found him faithful in the duties of an Apostle; and therefore reuealeth the knowledge of many secrets vnto him in most full manner: euen so it is in Gods church at this day: all that haue care to know the will of God, and doe it, though their knowledge be small at the first, yet the Lord will helpe them, and adde dayly to their knowledge. And the cause why many heare the word of God and profit not; but wax worse, or stand at a stay, is, because they labour not to haue their knowledge increased, by putting in practise that which they know: for if they did, then to him which hath, should more bee added, and hee should haue abundance. As on the contrarie, when wee bee negligent to heare or know, and to obey the will of God: wee haue a spirit indeed sent vpon vs, yet not Gods spirit, but the spirit of slumber, of blindness and ignorance, *so that* 1 Iay 6. 9. *wee see, and see not; heare, and vnderstand not,* 1 Iay 6. 9.

On the Lords day. In these words is the fourth circumstance, namely, the time when this vision was shewed to *S. Iohn*. This day which here is called the Lords day, among the Iewes was the first day of the weeke called by vs Sunday. It is called the Lords day for two causes: First, because on this day Christ rose from death to life: for Christ was buried the euen of the Iewes Saboth, which is

our Friday; and heerefted in the graue their whole Saboath, which is our Saturday; and rofe the first day of the weeke early in the morning, which is our Sunday.

Secondly, this first day of the weeke (according to the Iewes account) came in stead of the Iewes Saboath, and was ordained a day of rest for the New Testament; and sanctified for the solempne worship of the Lord. And for this cause especially it is called *the Lords day*, the manifestation whereof (as some thinke) *Iohn* chiefly intended in this title. And touching this time: for our better vnderstanding, let vs consider three points: First, who changed the Iewes Saboath: secondly, for what cause: thirdly, whether the Church hath now in the New testament power to change the Saboath day we now celebrate, to any other day of the weeke.

For the first: it is commonly thought that the Iewes Saboath was changed into this *Lords day* by christian emperours, long after the ascension of Christ. But it is more consonant to the tenour of the New testament to hold, that Christ himselfe was the author of this change. My reasons are these: First, that which the Apostles deliuered and enioyned the Church, that they received from Christ, either by voyce or instinct, for they deliuered nothing of their owne head. But the Apostles deliuered, and inioined this Saboath to the Church, as to bee kept a day of holy rest to the Lord, as appeareth, *1. Cor. 16. 1*. Where *Paul* ordained in the Churches of Galatia & Corinth, *That the collection for the poore should be on the first day of the weeke*: This hee left not to the choice of the church, but appointed it by authoritie Apostolicall from Christ.

Now the day of collecting for the poore (as appeareth in the histories of the church) was the Saboath day, when the people were assembled for Gods seruice. For this was the custome of the church for many yeares after Christ, First to haue the word preached, and the Sacraments administred, then to gather for the poore: and for this cause in the writings of the church, the Lords supper is called a Sacrifice, an oblation, and the masse; not a reall sacrifice as the Pa-

pists vse it; but spirituall, because therewith was ioined collection for the poor, which was a spiritual oblation, not to the Lord, but to the church for the reliefe of the poore; and it was called the masse, because the collected releefe thereat was sent to the poore Saints abroad. A second reason is this: The Apostles themselves kept this day for the Saboath of the New testament, *Act. 20. 7*. And it cannot bee proued that they obserued any other day for an holy rest to the Lord after Christs ascension, saue onely in one case, when they came into the assemblies of the Iewes, who would keepe none other but the old Saboath of the law. A third reason is *Ioh. 20. 19. 26*. *The same day wherein Christ rose from death, being the first day of the weeke, he appeared to his disciples, being gathered together, and taught them many things, which concerned the gouernment of his Church. And eight dayes after being the first day of the weeke, he appeared vnto them for the same end.* Now it is more than likely that Christ in his owne person gaue them an example to celebrate and keepe that day, wherein hee rose againe, for a Saboath of the New testament.

II. point. The Saboath of the Iewes was changed for two causes. First, to maintaine the libertie of the church of the New testament, whereof this was a great part, that they were freed from the ceremonies of the Iewes: For when this day was changed, the church was no more tied to the Iewes Saboath, neither had any such regard of daies and times.

Secondly, that there might be a more fit time for the memorie of the worke of mans redemption: For as God in the Old testament appointed the seuenth day to bee a day of rest to remember the first creation: So in the new testament it stands with reason there should be a day to celebrate this worke of redemption, which is a wonderful creation; wherein (as *Isay* saith) *are made a new heauen, & a new earth, Chap. 66*. And whereby men become new creatures, *2. Cor. 5. 17*. Nay this redemption is a more glorious worke than the creation; for in that creation *Adam* was the head, but in this redemption Christ Iesus is our head. By the first creation we receiued a temporal life; but by redemption wee receiue life eternall. In the creati-

creation *Adam* was espoused to *Eve*, but in the worke of redemption every Christian is espoused to Christ Iesus. By creation *Adam* had an earthly Paradise: in this redemption wee haue an heavenly kingdome. In the creation Gods power, and wisdom did principally appeare: in this redemption with power and wisdom he shewed mercie and iustice: Iustice in Christs passion, and mercie in our forgiuenesse. By creation he made man of nothing, but by redemption he made him of worse than nothing, and better than he was. Therefore seeing this work of our redemption is farre passing the creation: it was meet a day should be set apart for the memorie thereof: Now no day could be more fit than the first day of the weeke, in which Christ rose again; whereby he confirmed the worke of our redemption: for hee died for our sinnes, and rose againe for our iustification, *Romans 4. 25.*

III. point. Whether may the church of the New Testament change this Saboath day to any other day of the week, as to tuesday, wednesday, &c. *Ans.* The church hath no such power, for time is the Lords, and the disposing thereof is in his hands. Therefore Christ saith to his Disciples, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the father hath kept in his owne hands, Act. 7. 6.* As if he should say, The father hath kept times and seasons in his owne power; and therefore it is not for you to know them: Now if that were a good reason, as no doubt it was; then is this also sound and good. If God haue the disposing of times in his hands, then it belongeth not to the church to dispose of them: but God hath the disposing of all times in his hands, *ergo.* And it may be otherwise hence gathered thus; If that which is lesse belong not to the Church, then that which is more doth not: But the knowledge of time and seasons which God hath in his power belongeth not to the Church, which is lesse than the disposing of times and seasons. And therefore the church hath not power to dispose of them; and so by consequent may not alter the Saboath day. *Obiect.* In the Old testament the Iewes appointed festiuall dayes: as the feast of Dedication which Christ kept holy, *Ioh. 10. 22.* instituted by the

Machabees, in token of thankfulness for their deliuerance: and for resting of religion and the Temple which *Antiochus* had pulled downe. And also *Mordichay* instituted the feast *Purim* ^{*Esh. 9. 17.*} which was celebrated of the Iewes afterwards.

Now if they had power to make holidays, then they might alter the Saboath day; and so may the church in the New testament. *Ans.* These feasts of the Iewes were no Saboaths set wholly apart for the solempne worship of God: but were onely dayes of the solemnitie appointed by the church in token of ioy and thankfulness for the repairing of the temple, & deliuerance of Gods people: And were onely celebrated as they scrued to put the people in mind of these outward benefits. So that whereas some hold that the church hath power to alter the Saboath day; or to make two more Saboath dayes in a weeke if it were convenient: it hath no ground in gods word. For that authoritie which doth alter this day must not be lesse than Apostolicall. And thus wee see why this day was called the Lords day.

Now if the first day of the weeke bee the Lords day, set apart for his honour in the memorie of so great redemption, then here are three sorts of men reprobued. First, those that make the Lords day a day of vaine pleasure and delight. This is the manner of all sorts of men, but especially of the yonger sort and seruants, who spend this day in carnall reioycing, in riot, gaming, and wantonnesse; neuer thinking of the worship of God, which is then to bee performed. But these sinne greatly against the Lord: for hereby they peruert the end of the Lords day: It should bee kept holy and glorious to the Lord, but they turne it to the worship and seruice of the diuell.

The second sort here reprobued, are those which loue more ciuilitie than the former; but yet they thinke they may do what they will on the Lords day: as to take their iourneys thereon, and imploy themselues in their ordinarie affaires; perswading themselues they may serue God with as good an heart when they are alone about their businesse, as they do who go to the church. But these men
sinne

sinne grievously against the fourth commandment: for hereby they make that their owne day which is the Lords.

A third sort here reprov'd, though not so bad as the former, are those who thinke it needfull to serue God at those ordinarie times of the Saboath which the lawes of the land inioyne vnto men; and therefore they will come duly to morning and euening prayer: thinking that they are not bound beside to heare the word of God preached, and that all the rest of the day they may doe what they will pertaining either to their profit or pleasure. Of this sort are our ignorant people, and a great number euery where. But they sinne grievously against God, for the Saboath day is called the *Lords day*, because it is wholly consecrated to his worship: but they part stakes with the Lord, and giue him but a part of his owne day, and that the lesser: taking the rest vnto themselves, which they mispend vpon their lusts. Now as these vices must be abhorred, so on the contrary, we must with all conscience keepe the Lords Saboath holy according to the fourth commaundement. And therefore wee must thereon cease from all workes of sinne, and from the workes of our callings; and sanctifie this day wholly by applying it all to the honor and worship of God. And here wee must remember that there is a double sanctification of the Saboath: publike, and priuate. Publike when men assemble themselves together publickly to heare Gods word for the increase of faith and knowledge: and to call on Gods name for further graces; as also to giue him thanks for his mercies; and to receiue his Sacraments. Priuate, when men in their priuate places employ themselves in holy duties of prayer, reading, and meditation vpon Gods word and works: whereby God is honoured, and their souls edified: and both these must bee performed to the Lord euerie Saboath day of euery man: For wee may not abridge God of that time wherein glorie should bee giuen to his name. If the officers should take our seruants in the weeke day from our priuate businesse, and employ them in publicke affaires, wee would thinke much at it, though it were for the common good. And shall wee not thinke that God

will take himselfe dishonoured of vs when we shall take either whole or part of his holiday, and imply it in our businesse. A maine cause why many profit little by the publick ministerie, is want of priuate sanctification of this day. Therefore wee must learne to sanctifie the Saboath of the Lord, for else we shall neuer increase in faith, knowledge, or obedience as wee should: for the begetting and increase whereof this day hath bene set apart and sanctified from the beginning.

Obiect. 2. Why did the Lord shew this vision vnto *Iohn* rather on this day than any other? *Answ.* Though *Iohn* were absent from the church in regard of bodily presence: yet hee was present in spirit with all the faithfull, and therefore no doubt in this day hee gaue himselfe to prayer, and other duties which he could performe for the glorie of God in that solitarie place. Now it is the Lords manner when his seruants are thus humbled, then to come and reueale himselfe vnto them in speciall manner. So hee did vnto *Daniel*, *Dan. 9.* & to *Cornelius*, *Act. 10.* and to *Peter* praying alone in the house toppe, *Act. 10. 11.* And so doubtlesse finding *Iohn* thus employed this Lords day, he reuealed his will vnto him touching the state of the church to the end of the world.

Hence we learne sundry instructions: First, whereas *Iohn* beeing in a solitarie Island kept the Saboath: wee may obserue, that all persons who are seuered from the assemblies of the Church; as the prisoners and those which are sicke of a dead paluesie, or other great diseases; as mariners though they bee in the midst of the sea, should keepe holy the Lords Saboath by performing such duties as God requireth: as prayer, confession of sins, & thanksgiuing; whereby God may bee glorified, though they cannot come to the publicke ministerie of the word.

Secondly, in that *Iohn* receiued his vision on the Lords day, when he gaue himselfe to prayer and holy duties; Hence ariseth a consideration to Gods church, *that God draweth neere to them, that draw neere to him*, as *Iames 4. 8.* And so let vs humble our selues and draw neere to the Lord by prayer, and thanksgiuing; and

and the Lord in mercie will shew himselfe sundry wayes, and draw neere vnto vs.

The cause why men haue so little tast of Gods mercie and loue towards them, is because they doe not draw neere vnto him, by doing those duties which hee requireth at their hands. For when men draw backe from God, is it not good reason hee should draw backe from them?

This therefore must stirre vp our harts, and moue vs to come often to God by prayer and thanksgiuing: for by vse in these duties shall wee get acquaintance with the Lord. Thus much of the circumstances of this vision.

And I heard behind me a great voice, as it had bene a trumpet. First, here followeth the parts of this vision, which are two: The beginning or entrance into it in this verse, the eleuenth, and part of the twelfth. Secondly, the matter and substance thereof from the twelfth verse to the end of the third chapter.

The entrance into the vision is a preparation; whereby the Lord maketh *Iohn* more fit to apprehend and receiue the things reuealed. In which preparation wee must obserue first the meanes: secondly, the parts thereof. The meanes whereby God prepareth him, is a voyce: *And I heard a voyce.* The like maner of preparation hath God vsed in former times when hee intended to make with *Adam* the couenant of reconciliation in the seed of the woman: First, hee prepared him by a voyce speaking vnto him before hee appeared, and by this voyce caused him to flie for feare. Then hauing rebuked him for his sinnes, hee made with him this couenant of grace, *Genes. 3.*

And in mount Synai before the Lord gaue the law, hee first came downe in thundering and lightning, and with the sound of a trumpet to terrifie the people: and then hee vttered his law to *Moyse*, and to his people. So when the Lord would instruct *Samuel* touching the house of *Elie*, he awoke him by a voyce, againe, and again: and then spake plainly vnto him. And in all visions visually, and generally the Lord vseth to prepare his seruants by voyces, by signes, and words, that they might bee more

fit to receiue such things as hee reuealed.

This dealing of God with *Iohn*, in preparing him to the worthy receiuing of this vision, teacheth vs that wee much more should bee prepared to heare and receiue the will of God; for wee come farre short of those excellent gifts of God, which were in *Iohn*, who yet must be prepared.

Our comming to heare Gods word, is to learne the same, for the increase of knowledge, faith, and obedience. Now the word of God is hard, and wee dull to learne; wee must therefore by all good meanes prepare our selues, that our minds and harts may be fit to receiue the same with profit. The cause of so little profit after long hearing, is want of preparation: but hereof we haue entreated already vpon the third verse.

This voyce is here set out vnto vs three wayes: First by the place whence it came: Secondly, by the qualitie of it: Thirdly, by the matter and substance which it contained. For the place: it was vttered from *behind him*: which the Lord obserued to stirre vp more attention in *Iohn*; for visually men doe more carefully marke those things which come on a sudden behind them, than those which are spoken or done directly before their face.

Secondly, for the qualitie of it, this voyce was *great*; as is exprested further by a similitude, *Like the sound of a trumpet*; that is, full of power and maiestie. Which also God added vnto it, to further attention in *Iohn*. For if it had bene an ordinarie voyce, or small, hee would not so much haue regarded it: but being so sudden, so great, and full of maiestie, it could not but make him verie attentive.

Now seeing Christ is so carefull to prepare *Iohns* mind with attention and diligence to receiue the things which should bee told him: This teacheth vs, that when we come to heare Gods word we must vse all meanes of attention: for if it were needfull to *Iohn*, then it is farre more necessarie for vs, who are farre inferior to him in all gifts of vnderstanding and memorie. And here also is another cause of small profit and little liking of Gods word, namely, want of attention

Exod. 19, &

20

1. Sam. 3.

tention in the heart. Wee must therefore like godly *Lydia* Act. 16. stur vp our dull and heauie spirits, and with all diligence marke the things wee heare. And here wee must take heed of two enemies to attention: the first are by-thoughts; as when the bodie indeed is present, but the mind wandereth from the word, and is wholly possessed with thoughts of pleasure, or other worldly affaires: For these bee thornes in the ground of our hearts, which choke the good seed of the word. Many will complaine they cannot marke and remember that which is taught; now the cause is in themselves, their wandring thoughts, which hinder both vnderstanding and memorie: for the mind conceiuing other matters, cannot obserue how one point dependeth on another, much lesse remember them afterward.

The second enemy to attention, is dullnesse and heauinesse in body & soule; a common fault in many hearers, which sheweth it selfe by drowinesse and sleepeinesse in the time of preaching, when they ought to stur vp their bodies and hearts to all attention. If a man should bee dull and heauie when his prince is speaking vnto him of some weightie matter that is for his good, it would bee taken for a part of contempt and disloyaltie towards his maiestie. What disloyaltie then is this vnto the king of kings, that wee should be dull and heauie, when himselfe vouchsafeth to speake vnto vs out of his word, the mysteries of our saluation? And surely, among other things this drowinesse is one cause of small profit; by the ministerie of the word. And therefore if wee would increase in knowledge, and in the gifts of grace vnto saluation, we must prepare our selues before we come, and in hearing cast off all dullnesse of flesh and spirit, and with all might stur vp our selues to attentive hearing: so shall the word be blessed vnto vs; otherwise our hearing shall turne to our deeper condemnation.

Verse 11. Saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and that which thou seest write it in a booke, and send it vnto the seven Churches which are in Asia, vnto Ephesus, and vnto Smyrna, and*

vnto Pergamus, and vnto Thyatira, and vnto Sardai, and vnto Philadelphia, and vnto Laodicea.

These words containe the third description of this voyce, whereby *Iohns* heart was prepared; touching the substance and matter which was yttred: which consisteth in two things. The first is a testimonie in these words: *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.* The second a commaundement in the words following: *That which thou seest write, and send etc.*

1. Touching the testimonie, the substance thereof is set downe in the eight verse, where the words were handled, and the meaning shewed. They do serue directly to proue the Godhead, and eternitie of Christ, which Christ himselfe doth here auouch, to giue vnto *Iohn*, and vnto the Church full assurance, that the things now vttered, and delivered, were from God: for saying, *I am Alpha and Omega the first and the last*, it is as much as if he had said: *I which speake vnto thee am God, and therefore the things I deliver, are from God.*

In this testimonie note Gods speciall care in regard of his truth, hee doth not content himselfe with revealing his will vnto his Church; but more specially his care is, to certifie the Church of the truth thereof, that it is indeed from God. This hath bene Gods care from the beginning: When *Peter* receiued a vision from God, withall (a) Gods spirit assured him that the things revealed therein were certain & sure. And so when Christ preached the will of his father among men, hee did withall worke strange miracles, to confirme and seale vp the truth of his doctrine, that it was from God.

This speciall care of God over his Church doth first confute the Papists opinion touching Scripture. They hold the Scripture to be certaine in it selfe, but not vnto men, till the Church giue testimonie thereunto. But this is false: for God euer had this care over his Church, not onely to reueale his will vnto them, but also to vse meanes for the assurance of their consciences, that that which was revealed was his vndoubted and perfect will. And therefore the word of God is certaine, and euer was, not onely in it selfe

(a) Act. 10. 19

The Ps.

selfe, but to the consciences of beleevers, and that without the testimonie of the church: and so should bee, though the testimonie of the church should neuer come thereunto.

Secondly, hereby are confuted many carnall men, who will be of no religion; because (say they) there is no certaintie in the matters of religion: mens opinions thereon are so diuers, that so many men, so many minds almost, and no man can tell who speaks the truth. *Answer.* It may be that men in sundry matters hold sundry priuat opinions: yet in the Church of God, all the true members of Christ hold the same opinions touching the foundation of religion. But let it bee granted, that all men on earth were of diuers opinions touching matters of religion, should religion therefore bee vncertaine? God forbid. For religion is certaine vnto men, by the meanes that God hath appointed to certifie the consciences of the truth thereof; and thereby might men come to the truth & certaintie of religion taught by the Prophets and Apostles, though all men in the world were of diuers opinions touching the same: Thus much of the Testimonie.

III. point. The commaundement giuen to *Iohn* in these words: *That which thou seest write in a booke; and send it to the seuen Churches which are in Asia.* This commaundement hath two parts: First, *to write the things seen in a booke;* secondly, *to send the booke to the seuen Churches here named.* And both these must *Iohn* do, being now disabled by his exile to preach these things vnto them personally, for these causes. First, that these churches might be edified in the faith, and strengthened in these most grievous times of persecution. Secondly, that they might become keepers of this booke for the good of others: for the Church of God is the pillar of truth; not onely, for that it publisheth Gods trueth, but also because it keepeth it, and giueth testimony thereunto.

In this commaundement note sundry things. First, that the word of God, written and penned by the hand of man, is a notable helpe to the church of God, and a worthy meanes to edifie the same. *Christ* would neuer have commaun-

ded *Iohn* to haue written these visions, & sent them to the churches. Which serueth to confute the blind Papists, which say the word written is but an *inkie letter*, and a *nose of waxe*; because the sence thereof may be turned euery way as man will. This also confuteth the Anabaptists, which so much magnifie their Revelations, and make no account of the word written. If the Lord had thought it best, he would haue taught these Churches by Revelation: but they must learne by the word written.

Secondly, that the reading of Gods word either publicly or priuately, is an ordinance of God: for the Lord commaunding *Iohn* to write this booke, and send it to the churches; hereby implieth, that they must read the same as they did other bookes of Scripture. The preaching of the word is indeed the most worthy instrument for the founding and confirming of Gods Church, whereby ordinarily iustifying faith is wrought in the heart: and yet reading must haue his due reuerence, as a meanes to consume; and increase true knowledge, faith, and repentance, where it is begun.

Thirdly, here note, that a man may be vnder the crosse, and in perfection, and yet remaine in the special fauor of God: for this banishment into such a desert place, was vnto *Iohn* a grievous crosse: and yet the Lord vouchsafed there to reueale himselfe vnto him, and to make him the penman of this booke. Which honour hee vouchsafeth not to all, but to them that are most deare vnto him. Which thing each one should carefully obserue: for our nature is so corrupt, that when we are vnder the crosse, it would perswade vs, wee are cast out of the loue and fauour of God.

In the end of the verse, the seuen Churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, and the rest are named. Which seuen places, were seuen famous cities in Asia, wherein were planted the most famous churches that were in those parts, and for their excellencie are they named. And thus much for the meanes of *Iohns* preparation. Now follow the parts thereof, which are two: first is hearing, folded vp with the former meanes. *And I heard a voyce.* Second is Turning of himselfe to see the

the partie that spake vnto him in these words.

Verse. 13. *Then I turned backe to see the voice which spake with me: and when I was turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.*

That is, so soone as I heard this sudden and mightie voice, I turned my selfe to see who it was that vttered the same. In this behavior of *Iohn* we are to learne our dutie: so to dispose our hearts towards God in the receiuing of his word, as *Iohn* disposeth himself towards Christ in the receiuing of this vision. So soone as the voyce spake, *Iohn* hearkened, and because the found thereof came behind him, he turned himselfe to looke on him that vttered it. Euen so must wee do, we are by nature strangers with God, flow to heare when he speaketh, and readie to turne our hearts from God, when wee heare. Therefore when God speaketh vnto vs in the ministerie of his word, we must hearken: And though wee be going another way, yet wee must turne our selues from our euill wayes, and encline our hearts to his voyce, that we may haue fellowship with him. *S. Iohn* had not seen this marvellous vision, vnlesse hee had turned himselfe to behold him that spake. No more shall we at any time feele true fellowship with the Lord, vnlesse wee turne our hearts vnto his word, and that betimes, whiles he speaketh vnto vs in the ministerie thereof.

Thus much for the first part of the vision, viz. the entrance thereunto. The second part is the matter and substance of the vision; containing a most worthy representation of Christ in his maiestie, as he is the Prophet, King, and Priest of his church: set downe at large by a description of Christ, continuing from this twelfth verse vnto the end of the third chapter; wherein *Iohn* sheweth what hee receiued of Christ, partly by hearing, and partly by seeing. And first he beginneth his description of Christ, as hee saw him represented in vision: and so describeth him by two arguments. First by the place where he saw him: Secondly, by his forme and figure wherein hee appeared.

I. For the place, *Iohn* saw him in the

middest of the seven golden candlesticks.

These seven candlesticks here scene, are the seven Churches of Asia: the particular churches of God, being compared to candlesticks, as Christ expoundeth himselfe, ver. 20. Now the particular congregations of Gods church bee called candlestickes, for that resemblance which is betweene them. For as the candlesticks serue to beare vp & hold forth the light that is set therein: so the particular churches of God on earth, they beare vp and shew forth the light of the Gospell vnto the whole world, partly in the ministerie of the word, and partly in the profession of the faith of Christ.

From hence sundry things are to bee learned: first obserue, that the churches are rather called *candlesticks* than *candles*; To giue vs to vnderstand, that they haue no light of themselves, or from themselves, but onely are Gods instruments to beare vp and hold forth the light in the ministerie of the word, and profession of the faith: for Christ Iesus is the onely true lampe & candle that giueth light to the heart and conscience by his holy spirit in his word.

Secondly, hence euerie one that professeth himselfe to bee a true member of Gods church, must learne his duty, which is earnestly to labor to become a shining and burning candle. Indeed this principally concerns the ministers of the church: and therefore *Iohn Baptist* is called a burning and shining light, *Iohn* 1. ver. 35. but yet it must also be verified of euery member thereof, as *S. Paul* commandeth: (a) *Shine* (saith hee) *as lights in the world, in the middest of a naughty and crooked nation: holding forth the doctrine of life*, that is, the gospell. *Quest.* How shall euery member of the church become a burning light? *Ans.* First, he must haue his mind enlightened in the knowledge of Gods will and word: and then as a candlestick hold out and send forth the beames thereof to others; partly by teaching within the compasse of his calling, and partly by example of an honest and blamelesse life and conuersation. Thus we should do, if wee would be answerable to our profession. And to induce vs hereunto, let vs obserue the reasons following.

First, it is Gods commandement, *Shine*

(*) Phil. 2. 15.
16.

as lights (saith S. Paule) in the world, Philip. 2. 15. And, *walk as children of the light* Ephes. 5. 8. Secondly, consider the fruit hereof, which is wonderfull great. For by godly instruction in our places, and by answerable obedience in our liues we win many to the Lord: shewing forth such lights, whereby others may walke in this darke world to the kingdome of heauen; which is a most blessed light. In the Winter season men thinke they doe others great pleasure, if in the night they hang forth a light to guide passengers a little way in an earthly walke. What a blessed thing then is this, that a man should alwaies hold forth that light which shall guide a sinful wicked wretch to leaue the wayes of death, and to walke in the pathes of righteousnesse to eternall life? But on the contrary, when men liue in Gods church like candles put out by reason of the blindness of their minds, and the badnesse of their liues; hence cometh great hurt & danger to others with whom they liue: for they lead others that depend vpon them to the pit of destruction, especially they who know the will of God, and yet make not conscience to shew forth the same by good example of a godly life. For as in an haueu towne, if any man in the night time do remoue the sea-mark which guideth the ships in the right channell, hee doth as much as in him lieth to cast away all the ships that are comming neere the shore, by causing them to run on rockes and sands: euen so they that should giue light in the church, if they giue either no light, or false light to such as depend vpon them, who are sayling in the sea of this sinfull world, hereby they lead and direct them to a wrong haueu, and in stead of heauen bring their soules to eternall perdition: which must terrifie vs from ignorance and euill workes, and make vs labour to shine as lights in this world by good instruction and godly conuersation. Third reason. Consider the fearefull iudgements of God against such as liue in his Church as members thereof, and yet giue no light: they doe incurre the fearefull wrath of Christ. In the Temple, the keeping of the lamps and lights belonged to the priest, and therefore he had his snuffers, and other instruments to trim

the same: which notably figured the dutie of Christ in the Church of the new Testament: for hee is our high priest, who looketh to euerie light in the Sanctuary, that is, to euerie member of his Church, who ought to shine as a lampe; and when they burne but dimly and darke, hee hath his snuffers to trim them, and make them giue a better light, both by godly life, and good instruction. But when hee hath snuffed them againe and againe, if still they burne darke and dim, and giue either no light, or else a false light, then surely he will either cast them out of the Temple, or else tread them vnder his feet. Wee graunt this libertie to euerie gouernour, when he hath light vp candles for his familie, if any of them will not burne clearly, he may snuffe it; if that will not serue, hee may cast it into the fire, and set another in its place. And shall wee denie to Christ Iesus the like authoritie in his Church, which is his house, ouer men and women, who ought to shine as lights? God forbid. The minister therefore in this place, and euerie other Christian in the compasse of his calling must labour to bee a shining candle, both for knowledge and godly life before all the world, that so hee may escape Gods feareful iudgements. In common reason we ought to carry our selues as shining lights before others. It is an vsuall thing in the Winter time to hang forth lights for the guiding of mens bodies safe from place to place. Now if we haue such care ouer their bodies, wee ought to haue much more care ouer their soules both; that by the light of grace in vs, sinners and wicked men may bee guided in the darke and dangerous way of this world to the kingdome of heauen.

Here then all ignorant persons and loose liuers, who abound in euerie place, must bee admonished to reforme themselves, and labour to become lights in Gods Church. They stand as candles, but they are extinct and giue no light to others. Ignorant persons therefore must cast off their ignorance, and labour for knowledge: and wicked liuers must reforme their loosenesse of life, and become obedient to the word of truth, that so they may shine vnto others. If a man haue a candle set vp in his familie and shall

shal assay to light it, and snuffe it once or twice, and cannot get it burne, then in displeasure hee will trample it vnder his feet, or cast it into the fire. Euen so Christ Iesus seeking to enlighten the minds of these ignorant persons, and to reforme the liues of these loose liuers by the ministerie of the word: when he shal perceiue that they refuse the light, and will not be reformed, vndoubtedly in furie of his wrath, he will at length pluck (a) them from their places, & stamp them to powder, and cast them to hell. Many be ignorant in euerie place, and moe bee prophane, and small is the number of good shining lights: but we must remember our dutie, and walke worthy our calling. If we hold forth the light of knowledge and obedience, wee shall shine as the firmament in the world to come, Dan 12.3.

Golden candlestick. The churches of God are not base candlestickes, but candlestickes made of gold. There bee two causes of this resemblance: First, because gold is the most excellent of all mettals: so Gods churches here on earth are the most excellent of all societies. The companies and societies of men in families, townes and kingdomes, and in other common affaires of this life, be the ordinance of God, and good in their kind; but yet the societie of saints in the church of God, doth farre surmount them all, & that in these respects: First, because in Gods church saluation may bee obtayned, but in other societies, as they are societies, though sundry benefits arise from them, yet saluation is not to bee had in them, vnlesse they bee either particular churches or members thereof. Secondly, the church of God is the end of all other societies; and they are all ordained to preserve and cherish the church, which is the societie of the Saints. Thirdly, the church beautifieth all other societies: the principall praise & dignitie of any town, household, or kingdome is this; that they are either churches of God, or true members thereof.

From this preheminance of the church we are taught: aboue al things to labor to become true members of this societie. Men haue great care to become members of incorporations & towns of greatest priuiledges; but few there bee that

seek for the priuiledges of Gods church: And commonly those that seek most for priuiledges in chiefe towns, haue the least care to become the true members of Gods church; which is a wretched practise and ought not to be among vs, seeing the church hath priuiledges farre aboue all other societies.

Secondly, hence wee are taught aboue all things to haue care to preserve the societie of the Church of God. True it is, the minister & magistrat must haue chief care thereof: and yet every man in his place must do his best indeuour hereunto, because it is the most principall societie:

Thirdly, in that Gods church is the most excellent societie, giuing honour to all others; we are taught within the compasse of our callings, as much as we can to bring all other societies vnto this. Those that are members of a familie, must labour to bring euerie one in their familie to bee good members of the Church: And so in ciuill societies, men of gouernment must labour that the members of the ciuill body, become also members of Christs bodie. Thus gouernors of kingdomes should labour that the parts of their dominions may be particular churches of God. And there is good reason of this dutie; because all other societies without this are companions of men in the darke, sitting in the shadow of death, being spiritually blind, and without all sound comfort in their soules. Secondly, the church is compared to a candlestick of gold, because of all societies among men it is most precious & deere vnto God: and therefore it is resembled to a *seale* (b) on Christs hars, and a *signet* on his arme: yea, it is as deare vnto him as the *apple of his eye*, Zachar. 2.8. *The Church is the Queene that stands on Christs right hand in a vesture of gold*, Psal. 45.9. Yea that which surpasseth all, *Christ redeemed* (c) *the church vnto himselfe by his arme blood*. Oh then how deere and precious is she in his sight: And hereby also we are taught the same instructions that did arise from the former preheminences, namely, to haue speciall care of Gods church to preserve the same, and to labor to become our selues, and to bring others to be members thereof. And thus much of the title of the church.

(a) Psal. 5.5

(b) Cant. 3.6

(c) Act. 20.28

Vers 13.

Now it is added that Christ the Messiah is *in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*: whereby is signified: First, that Christ is present with his Church at all times: And secondly, that being present he hath care to gather his church; and being gathered to preserve the same against the gates of hell, and all other enemies.

From hence we learne sundry things: First, that the supremacie of the Church of Rome, wherein one is made head of all the militant church, is needlesse: For Christ is present alwaies with his church, hauing speciall care to gather, guide, and preserve the same, and hee needeth no vicar generall to supply his roome, for in the presence of the prince all commissions of vicegerencie doe cease: though Christ had granted this supremacie to any, yet so long as Christ is present, their commission must cease; and it is as great pride, and greater, for any to presume to be head of all churches in Christs presence, than for a man to sit vicegerent in the presence of the prince.

Secondly, seeing Christ is alwaies present with his church, wee are taught to walke with God, and before God, as *Enoch* did, *Gen. 5. 22*. Which dutie stands in these points. First, whatsoeuer we say, or take in hand, wee must doe it as in the presence of Christ. Secondly, wee must continually depend vpon Christs providence, who is euer present with his church, providing all things for the good of his church, and of euery member thereof. Thirdly, wee must do all our actions as looking for approbation at the hands of Christ: for which end wee must take direction for the same out of his word.

The practise of this dutie is most excellent: for by walking with God wee shall be enabled to many good duties; as namely, liue blameably in this wicked world, making conscience of all sinne, & approving our selves both to God and man in heart and life. And thus much for the place where *Iohn* saw Christ.

The second argument whereby *Iohn* describeth Christ is his figure, or forme, in these words, *One like the sonne of man*. Some thinke that these words are a description of some Angell, not of Christ, because he is said to be like the sonne of man, not the sonne of man himselfe, but they are deceived: For he which is here described is

before called *the first, and the last, it is hee which was dead & is aline*, which cannot agree to any but to Christ. Now the words may more significantly be translated thus, *One like to a sonne of man*: for if it be translated *that sonne of man*, then Christ must needs be the resemblance: for so he is called *Act. 7. 56*. But here Christ is said to be like to a sonne of man, by the vsuall phrase of the Old testament: whereby is meant that hee is like vnto a man. And Christ is not here called a man, but is sayd to be like vnto a man, because hee appeared vnto *Iohn* not in his true manhood, which was then in heauen, but in the likenesse of his manhood. And note this, that as Christ here appeared to *Iohn* in this vision, so did he alwaies appear after his ascension. *Stephen* indeed saw his true manhood, *Act. 7.* but it was in heauen: and *Paul* heard his voice when he was conuerted, *Act. 9. 5.* and saw the Lord, *1. Cor. 9. 1.* But no man can proue that Christ appeared vnto him in his true manhood, vnlesse it were in heauen. And in all these visions *Iohn* saw not his true manhood, but a resemblance thereof. Now Christ appeared thus for speciall consideration, for man is too much addicted to his bodily presence: this was the fault of his owne friends and Disciples. Therefore Christ would hereby teach vs, not to seeke for his bodily presence, but rather to lift vp our hearts to heauen, and therefore seeke to haue fellowship with him by faith. For this cause hee said to *Mary* after his resurrection, *Touch mee not, I am not yet ascended to my father, Ioh. 20. 17.* This *Paul* had learned, *Though we had knowne Christ* (saith he) *after the flesh, yet henceforth know wee him no more, 2. Cor. 5. 13.* Now if Christ after his ascension neuer appeared in his true manhood, it teacheth vs, that the defence of Christs real presence in the Sacrament is needlesse. For if Gods church haue spiritual fellowship with Christ by faith, it is sufficient. Again, whereas Christ appeared in the shape & forme of man after his ascension, the Papists gather, that we must haue an image of Christ, & so answerably of the Father, and of the holy ghost, in those formes wherein they appeared: as of the holy Ghost in the forme of a (a) dove, and (b) of the Father in the likeness of an old man. *Ans.* It is not vnlaw-
full

(a) Math. 3.

(b) Dan. 7. 9.

full to make, or to haue an image of Christs manhood, so that it be out of religious vse (though it bee doubtfull whether any now haue a true picture therof) but if it bee to represent whole Christ, God and man, or be vsed to remember Christ thereby, or to worship Christ therein, it is an idoll. As for the forms of an *old man*, or of a *doue*, they may bee made for the manifestation of the hystorie of the Bible, when it is painted or pictured: but then wee must conceiue, that these formes are no images of the father, sonne, or holy ghost, but onely representations of such visible appearances, as sometimes were signes and pledges of the presence of those persons. But now to abstract those formes apart from the hystorie, and to make them images of any person in Trinitie, is flat against the second commandment; which doth generally forbid al images of God, not excepting those verie shapes in which himselfe tooke liberty to testifie his presence for some time. And there being no exception against Gods commandment, it is in vaine to seeke shifts & excuses for a thing forbidden, specially considering wee may not meddle with God, beyond our commission from God.

Clothed with a garment downe to his feet. Here Christ is further described by his attire. The first part whereof is, *A long garment reaching to his feet.* The causes why hee so appeared, may be these. First, to signifie that he is the high priest of the new Testament, and so continueth, doing the offices of the high priest for his Church after his ascension, in presenting the merit of his owne only sacrifice, and making intercession to God the father for them. For the long garment was one of those wherewith the high priest was clothed in his ministration, vnder the law.

Secondly, to signifie that hee is *The Prince of peace*: for the long garment not onely in the church of God, but among the Heathen, hath bene alwaies a note of peace: and so Christ is called, *Isay 9.6.*

Thirdly, to shew that he had in his breast *the (a) treasure of the wisdoms of the father, and the (b) spirit of counsell.* For this long robe alwaies pertained to them that excelled in counsell and wisdom: and so Christ is described, *Isay 11.3.* Now in this

example of Christ we may learne a duty touching our attire: namely, that the outward garment of the bodie should be suitable to the good things that ought to be in the heart: as to our wisdom, knowledge, feare of Gods name, to our sobriety, modestie, temperance, humilitie; and all other vertues whatsoeuer. Wee must not onely in speech and action, as in hearing Gods word, and receiuing the Sacraments shew our selues to bee burning lights; but euén by the gesture and attire of our body, both for matter and forme, shew forth the grace of our hearts. But miserable are these times, wherein mens attire is suitable, not to the graces of God that should be in their hearts, but to the common corruption of the times. For such it is generally, whereby a farre off (though he neuer had acquaintance with the partie) a man may see the vanitie and lightnesse of his mind, the pride, and folly of his heart, that weareth it.

The second part of Christs attire is this: *Girded about the pappes with a golden girdle.* It hanged not loose about him, but was girded close to his bodie: whereby is signified, that he is a mediator, euery way readie prepared to doe the office of a mediator for his Church: for in all ages the (a) girding of the attire to the bodie hath bene a signe of care and diligence in the businesse they haue in hand; and the contrarie, not girding, a signe of carelesnesse, and negligence therein. When Christ was here on earth, he was most pitiful to all penitent sinners, he reiected none such that came vnto him, but regarded them far more than the Scribes and Pharisees, that were the learned men among the Iewes. And since his ascension he hath not left off his care and diligence, but is alwayes ready, doing all such duties which may pertaine to their salvation.

The consideration whereof, is a matter of excellent comfort vnto all such as haue any sparke of grace. First hereby wee learne, that when wee truly humble our selues, Christ is readie to receiue our prayers, and in all our troubles & temptations readie to relieue, to comfort, and deliver vs: and in our death ready to receiue our soules, yea at all times prepared to doe whatsoeuer may further our salvation. He is not like vnto *Pharab*

butler, who promised to remember Joseph while he was in prison with him, (4) *but forgate him quite when he was advanced to honour againe.* But he is alwayes mindfull of vs, and euer readie to doe all the works of a mediator for vs. Whence we are taught answerably, to haue our loyns girded, as Christ commandeth *Luke. 12. yeres 35* being euer readie to doe all duties that concerne Christianitie: as to call on Gods name, & to praise God, to practise faith, repentance, and obedience; fit to die, and fit to liue; neuer suffering our selues to be vnfit for any thing that concerns our saluation; but at all times stand ypon our watch, that whensoever God shall call, we may be readie to enter into the kingdome of heauen. But alas the ease with most men goeth far otherwise: they fit themselves for the world at all times: but few seeke to prepare themselves for the kingdome of heauen till death do come.

This ought not to bee: It is a treacherous part in any subject to bee vnprepared for the seruice of his prince, and yet euer readie to receiue a common enemy. And it is no lesse treason against God, to forslow our preparation for the Lord, by fitting our selues for the world.

Further he is sayd to be girded, not *about the loyns, but about the pappes & breast.* Whereby some say (and not vntruly) is signified, that there is no defect, or aberration in any motion or affection in our Sauiour Christ, but euerie thought & inclination of his heart is kept in order by the fulnesse of the spirit which dwelleth in him bodily.

Verse 14. *His head and haire were white as white wooll and as snow: and his eyes were as a flame of fire.*

In the third place, *Iohn* here describeth Christ by the parts of his bodie. The whitenesse of his head & haire, signifieth the eternitie of Christ. For howsoever as he is man, he had a beginning; yet in regard of his godhead he is eternall, and therefore is called *The ancient of daies Dan. 7.* and is said to *haue bene in the beginning, Iohn 1. 1.* that is, to haue had a being before all other things had their beginning. In this resemblance of his eternitie, by

head and haire, as white as wooll and snow, hee giueth vs to vnderstand, an honour and prerogative in the aged man, whereby hee excelleth the yonger sort: to wit, the horenesse and whitenesse of his haire, for which cause in the word of God it is set forth by most worthy comparisons: as by *the white Almond tree, Eccles. 12. 5.* And by *a glorious silver crowne*, not made by man, but by the hand of God set vpon his head. And herein doth this excellencie of the aged consist; that they beare the image of Gods eternitie before all that are of yonger yeres. From whence all yonger men are taught to reuerence the aged by *(b) rising vp before him*: acknowledging thereby the preheminance of the hoare head. (b) Leu. 19. 31

Againe, hereby the aged are taught to carrie themselves answerable to their estate and condition; they ought to excell all their yongers in knowledge, wisdom, and experience of good things, *1 Iohn 2. 13. I write vnto you fathers (that is aged men, who by reason of yeares are fathers) because you haue knowne him who is euerslasting.*

Also they must be holy, as hee that is eternall is holy, whose eternitie they shew forth: And therefore *Salomon* saith, *The white head is a crowne of glorie*, when it is found in the way of righteousness: that is, in one that walketh in the way of righteousness, *Prou. 16. 31.* for his white haire signifieth, that hee hath spent much time and care about good duties. But it is no ornament vnlesse it be ioyned with holinesse of heart and life. Which I say because many yonger men excell the aged in the knowledge of God, & other vertues: which is a shame to the gray headed, for as they go before others in yeares, so they ought to excell in pietie, knowledge, and all vertues. Ignorance and loosenesse of life is a foule vice in any; but in him that beares the silver crowne, intollerable. For how can they looke for reuerence from the yonger, when as they bee farre inferior to them in gifts of grace? It is no excuse for old men to say, *Their wits are not so ripe as yong mens are; and their memorie failes them.* Their aged ignorance argueth that they spent the time of their youth loosely and prophanely: For *they that be played in the house of the Lord, shall bring*

bring forth fruits in their age, Psal. 92. 13.
14. A plant is young, and therefore hee
that would weare the crowne of glorie
in his age, must receive the sappe of
grace in the house of God while hee is
young.

And his eyes were as a flame of fire, here
John proceedeth in describing the parts
of Christs bodie. In the handling where-
of it is hard for any to set downe certain-
ly, what the holy Ghost intendeth in eu-
ery particular. It shall bee sufficient for vs
to follow that interpretation which is
most probable and best agreeing with
the tenor of Gods word.

In this description of Christs eyes, are
signified to vs two things: First, that
Christ the mediator and redeemer of his
Church, is of most quicke, shape, and
piercing sight, so as hee beholdeth all
things that are done vpon the earth: yea,
he seeth into the verie secret thoughts of
mens hearts; thither can the eyes of his
godhead more easily pierce, than fire can
do into the substance of bodily things.
And there is great necessitie it should be
so, for beeing head and gouernor of his
Church, hee must know all the parts and
members thereof: he must behold their
seuerall estates, and see the malice and
practises of Sathan, and other enemies a-
gainst them.

Now in that Christ our Saviour hath
this piercing sight, we are taught to haue
care, not onely of our words and actions,
but also of the verie secret thoughts, pur-
poses, and desires of our hearts: for the
piercing eye of Christ seeth them all,
therefore we must be sure they bee well
ordered. In the courts of men, thoughts
and inward motions beare no action, but
with God it is otherwise. Christ Iesus
hath a fierie eye, that seeth into all our
thoughts, and there he holdeth a court of
iudgement. Therefore we must keepe a
godly watch ouer all the imaginations of
our hearts, that they may be approued of
Christ, least for them we bee iudged and
condemned.

Secondly, this teacheth vs in matters
of religion to bee that indeed which wee
seeme to bee in profession. For though
wee may deceiue men, which know not
our hearts, yet we cannot deceiue Christ:
for by his fierie eyes he seeth whatsoeuer
is in vs. And yet the common practise

of the world is here to be reprobued, who
tearmeth them hypocrites that take vp-
on them any profession for the name
and religion of Christ. But herein men
go beyond their calling: it belongeth
onely vnto the piercing eye of Christ, to
iudge and looke at mens hypocrisie of
heart.

Secondly, by these fierie eyes is signi-
fied, That Christ is full of anger, wrath,
and iudgement against all sinners, readie
to take vengeance on all those that will
not yeeld subiection vnto him by turn-
ing from their sinnes, and beleeuing
in him: for Christ as he is a Saviour, so is
he a Iudge; and therefore in the parable
he saith: *Those mine enemies that would not
that I should rule over them, bring them hi-
ther, and slay them before me.* The conside-
ration hereof serueth to awake many an
one out of the sleepe of sinne. This age
is miserable, if wee regard the practise of
faith and repentance which God requi-
reth; for men liue in ignorance without
knowledge, they goe on in loosenesse of
life without reformation; which is both
scandalous vnto men, and odious vnto
God: not one of an hundred turneth to
God at the preaching of his word, re-
newing his wayes by dayly repentance.
But vnto many it is meat and drinke to
go on in those sinnes wherein their harts
delight. But let these men consider, that
Christ is a righteous Iudge; beholding
his enemies with fierie and fierie eyes,
alwayes readie to take vengeance on
them that do not repent: and therefore
they must in time consider their estate,
for if they perseuere in their euill wayes
as they haue begun, the truth is, he still
beholdeth them with his fierie eyes, and
though in his great patience hee spare
them for a time, yet at length he will put
in practise the execution of his iudge-
ment, and slay them for enemies: as it is
in the parable, *Luke 19. 27.* Let them re-
member what a fearefull thing it is to fall
into the hands of God, if his wrath bee
kindled neuer so little, *Psal. 78. 22.* *And his
fast like vnto fine brasse,*
And his voice as
the sound of many waters. qui omni
id est loquens deus et dicitur loqui
no The word in the originall signifieth
Brasse that shineth, which for substance
is

Luke 19. 27.

is pure and durable, a very choyce and excellent kind of brasle. And hereunto Christs feet are compared, to signifie vnto vs his inuincible power, whereby hee is able not only to encounter with sinne, Sathan, and death; but also that hee hath alreadie entered combat with them, and hath bruised the heads of these his enemies. Yea hereby is signified, that hee hath not onely done these things in his owne person, but also will doe the same in all his members, by his inuincible power, vnto the end of the world. Which is a matter of exceeding great comfort to Gods church & people, neuer to be forgotten. If any man bee exercised in any grieuous temptation of Sathan, he must not be astonished and confounded therewith: but remember, that Christ our Sauiour hath the brasen feet, wherewith he hath bruised the head of the serpent, and will (if hee seeke vnto him vnfaignedly) bruise in him the serpents head: so by experience shall we find the benefit of his brasen feet.

If any be oppressed with the corruption of his nature, whether it bee in thoughts or affections; let him come vnto Christ Iesus, lay open his wants before him, shew his sinnes, and make knowne the strength thereof vnto him, and withall crie vnto him for helpe: and hee shall find by ioyfull experience, though they were neuer so many, or mightie, That the power of Christ in him, will vanquish, and subdue them all.

Againe, doth any feare the terrors of death (as all men doe by nature) let him consider, that Christ hath the feet of brasle, wherewith he did encounter with death vpon the crosse: and not content with that, went downe with him into his owne denne, and there did bruise his head, and subdue his power. Indeed if death were to encounter with vs in his full strength, it were a matter of feare: but considering that Christ hath bruised his head, this must stay our hearts against ouermuch dread. And as it serueth to minister comfort to the godly, so it is a matter of all terror and woe vnto those that liue impenitent: for Christ hath feet of brasle to bruise the head of all his enemies, and such are all those that go on in sinne; vnlesse they turne, destruction

will be their end. Let every one therefore looke vnto his soule, that hath led a course in any sinne. Let him forsake his old master Sathan, & the works of darknesse, and turne vnfaignedly to Iesus Christ in the practise of faith and true repentance, and by all obedience in the duties of his callings. For howsoeuer the patience of God may stay for a time the execution of his iustice and wrath, yet in the end they shall feelee by wofull experience the destroying power of these his brasen feet.

Burning as in a furnace. Feet ascribed to God and men in Scripture, doe oft time betoken their wayes: So here by Christs feet wee may vnderstand his workes and wayes. And whereas they are sayd to *burne as in a furnace*; thereby is signified the perfection thereof. All the counsels of God, with the execution thereof in the creation and government of the world, with all his workes therein, are all most holy and pure, like fine brasle purged in the furnace, *Psal. 18. 30. The wayes of God are vncorrupt, yea hee is holy in all his wayes.* Psal. 111. 7.

The consideration whereof, must teach vs to conceiue and speake reuerently of all the workes of God, euen of those most secret & strange iudgements, whereof wee cannot comprehend a reason. Yet because they proceed from God wee must acknowledge them pure and iust. In sundry points of religion there is a learned ignorance, whereof this is not the least, to hold our selues content, and to reuerence the workes of Christ, though wee see no reason thereof; nay, though to vs they seeme against all reason: for all the wayes of God are vncorrupt. Though the blind eye of men cannot discern the light of the Sunne, yet the Sunne is full of light: so though our blind eyes cannot behold the puritie of Gods workes, yet they are all done in iustice and equitie, yea they are iustice it selfe: for his will is the rule of iustice. And we must not thinke that God doth a thing because it is good and right: but therefore is the thing good and right, because God willeth and worketh it. Examples hereof wee haue in Gods word: *(a) God commanded Abimelech to destroy Sarah: Abraham prays he wil destroy him and all his household.* (a) Gen. 20. In mans reason this

this might ſeeme vniuſt: for why ſhould *Abimelechs* ſeruants bee puniſhed for their maiſters fault. So (a) *Achan* ſinneth, and all the hoſt of Iſrael is puniſhed. *Dauid* committed adultery, (b) & the child which he begat dieth. *Dauid* numbred the people: but all the people are ſmitten with the plague, 2. Sa. 24. All this to mans reaſon may ſeeme vnequal: yet being the works of God, we are with al reuerence to iudge them moſt juſt and holy. Again, the (c) Scripture ſheweth plainly, that God in his eternall counſell hath decreed to ſaue ſome, and to reiect others: and his reaſon moving him thereto, is not any thing foreſcene in them, but his will and pleaſure alone. This in mans reaſon ſeemeth to be cruelty towards ſome: and therefore ſundry men diſclaime this doctrine, as charging God with iniuſtice and tyranny. But herein they greatly offend: for it is the maniſeſt truth of God in his word: & therefore ought with reuerence to be acknowledged, though wee can ſee no reaſon therof. For who art thou oh man, that pleaideſt againſt God. Rom 9. 20.

And his voice as the ſound of many waters. The voice of Chriſt is reſembled to the ſound of many waters for two cauſes. Firſt, to ſignifie the loudneſſe and greatneſſe of it: the ſound whereof hath bene heard through all the world in the miniſterie of the Goſpell. Secondly, to ſhew the power & efficacie thereof in the ears of his creatures: for ſuch power it is of, that when the creatures were not, He but ſpoke the word & they were made. He. 1. 3. This powerfull voice of Chriſt, brought (d) *Lazarus* out of the graue after he had bene dead foure dayes bound hand and foot. And by this voice of Chriſt ſhall they that haue bene dead ſix thouſand yeares before, be raiſed vp to life. The houre ſhall come in the which all that are in the graues ſhall heare his voice: and ſhall come forth to iudgement, Job. 5. 28. 29.

Hereby then we may ſee the great ſecuritie and the deadneſſe of mens hearts in this age. For though the powerfull word of Chriſt bee daily ſounded into the ears of many; yet it entereth not into their hearts. They liue ſecurely in their finnes though they be daily exhorted to repentance. But ſhall dead *Lazarus* ſtart out of his graue when Chriſt ſaith, *Lazarus come forth*? Nay, ſhall they that were

conſumed to duſt many thouſand yeares before, at the hearing of Chriſts voyce riſe out of their graues? And ſhall wee which liue in bodie bee no whit affected with it in our ſoules? Oh fearefull death in ſinne! And yet this is the ſtate of all thoſe that will not bee moued to leaue their ſins by the miniſtery of the word. It may be the outward eare receiueth the ſound, but the dead heart receiueth no inſtruction. Wee muſt therefore apply our hearts to this powerfull voyce of Chriſt; and leaue the finnes wherein we haue lien dead, that ſo the quickning power hereof vnto ſaluation may appeare in vs.

Verſe 16. And he had in his right hand ſeuen ſtarres: and out of his mouth went a ſharpe two edged ſword: And his face ſhone as the ſunne ſhineth in his ſtrength.

Here *Iohn* proceedeth further, to ſet out the parts of Chriſts bodie and the properties thereof. By ſeuen ſtarres wee are to vnderſtand ſeuen Angels: that is, (as Chriſt expoundeth them verſe 20.) the ſeuen miniſters of the ſeuen churches of Aſia. And they are called ſtarres for theſe cauſes. Firſt, ſtarres giue light to men on earth: And ſo the miniſters ought to giue ſpiritual light to them that liue in the Church, both by doctrine, and by an vnblameable conuerſation. Secondly, ſtarres haue their continuall abode in heauen and deſcend not vnto the earth: So miniſters aboue all others ought to haue their conuerſation in heauen. This indeed is the dutie of euery Chriſtian; but eſpecially of the miniſter, in regard of his calling. And this heavenly conuerſation he muſt expreſſe: firſt, by ſeeking the conuerſion of his owne ſoule: and then the conuerſion of others, that they may haue an eternall manſion in heauen. Thirdly, they are called ſtarres becauſe (if they bee faithfull) they ſhall be honored of God, and made to ſhine as the ſtarres for euer and euer. Daniel 12. 3.

It is added that they are in Chriſts right hand. Whereby is ſignified that to him be-longeth the regiment, and government, & the whole diſpoſition of the miniſtery for matters that concerne the Church.

From

(a) Iſa. 7.

(b) 1. Sa. 13. 18.

(c) Rom 9.

(d) Iohn 11. 43. 44.

From whence arise sundrie instructions.

I. That it is Christ who giueth to his church ministers which preach the Gospell. For he (a) *ascendeth vpon high, & gane gifts vnto men, some to bee Apostles, some Prophets, and Euangelists, some Pastors and teachers for the gathering together of the saints; and for the worke of the ministerie, & for the edification of the body of Christ.* And for this cause we ought to pray daily vnto Christ, (b) *that he would thrust forth labourers into his harvest*; that the remnant of Gods elect may be gathered, and so wee see an end of these miserable dayes wherein we liue.

Secondly, in that Christ holdeth them in his right hand, wee may gather that Christ giueth protection & defence vnto his ministers, when they are faithfull and walke in their calling according to his will: which is a matter to be considered of all that are called into this office: For they haue sundry occasions of discouragement: as the negligence & backwardnesse of their people; the slanders and mockings of the enemies: But this protection of Christ must comfort them against them all; seeing they are in Christs right hand, they must go on with al godly boldnesse.

Thirdly, this sheweth the dignitie of this calling. Indeed it is despised and reputed base in the world; & hereby many are driven from it. But let the wicked iudge what they will: Behold Christ honoureth it, for his faithfull ministers are not onely present before him which were no small thing: but hee holdeth them in his right hand; than which, what greater glorie can bee done vnto them? This must bee an inducement vnto all those that are indued with gifts fit for this calling, to effect the same.

Lastly, euerie minister of the Gospell must hereby learne to bee faithfull in his calling, and holy in his conuersation: for by vertue of his calling hee is placed in Christs right hand. Now shall we thinke that Christ will long beare in his right hand any that are vnfaithfull, or prophane? Nay, he will take them out of his right hand, & put them vnder his feet of brasie, and there grind them to powder: For as they are honoured aboue others by their place, so shall their confusion be the greater, vnlesse they be faithfull. This

we may see in *Nadab and Abihu, Leuit. 10.1.* and *Hophni and Phineas, 1. Sam. 3. 13.* And in the same respect ought al the people of God to bee carefull to their wayes; for by their calling of christianitie they be members of Christ. Now if they be not faithfull and answerable to their profession, he will surely deale with them, as with vnfaithfull ministers, put them vnder his feet of brasie and confound them for ever: They must therefore make conscience of all sinne, & become not hearers onely, but doers of his will: so shall Christ protect them in this life, and saue them eternally.

And out of his mouth went a sharpe two edged sword. This sword that came out of his mouth, is nothing els but the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell vttered & propounded in the writings and ministerie of the Prophets and Apostles, *Heb. 4.12.* *The word of God is lively mightie in operation, and sharper than any two edged sword.* And it is thereto compared, because as a sword with a double edge entreth sharply into the flesh, & pierceth deeply into the bones, euen to the very marrow: So the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell entreth sharply and pierceth deeply into the very marrow of the heart of euerie man, to the diuiding of the thought and the spirit. This two edged sword, the word of God, hath a twofold operation. One vpon the wicked: Another in the elect. It woundeth the wicked at the very heart with a deadly wound, and thereby brings them to eternall death, *Isay 11. 4.* *Christ shall slay the wicked with the breath of his lips*: that is, with his word which is this two edged sword. Herewith shall he consume Antichrist, *2. Th. 2. 8.* visit *Leuiathan* and slay the dragon, that is, the greatest enemies of his Church, *Isay 27. vers. 1.*

Here consider how the word of God should kill an impenitent sinner. There be three degrees of spirituall death. First in this life, where an impenitent sinner receiveth his deadly wound: The second at the end of this life, when the bodie is laid in the graue, but the soule goeth to the torments of the damned: the third at the end of the world: when bodie and soule together go to hell eternally. Now a sinner receiveth in this life his deadly wound after this manner: Christ in the giuing

giuing thereof hath a threefold worke in his heart by the ministration of his word, which is this two edged sword. First, hereby he reuealeth vnto him his finnes, as hypocrisie, pride, and rebellion of heart, with all other his horrible and damnable transgressions against the first and second table, 1. Cor. 14. 24. 25. *When all prophesie, and there commeth in one vnlearned he is reprobated of all*, the Prophets by the word iudge him, and thereby lay open vnto him the secret sins of his hart, with the finnes of his life. Secondly, Christ hereby reuealeth vnto him his indignation & wrath, which is the curse of the law due vnto him: In which regard the law is called (a) *a killing letter*, shewing no mercie, but onely thundereth out the fierce wrath of God vpon transgressors. Thirdly, hereby Christ awaketh his guiltie conscience, sharpeneth the sting thereof, and terrifieth him at the hearing of his word. Thus wicked *Felix* trembled when he heard *Paul* preach (b) of temperance, righteousness, & the iudgement to come: So when king (c) *Belshazzar* saw the palme of the hand, writing things against him vpon the wal, his countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled him, his ioynts were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. And all these are wrought in the wicked without apprehension of mercy, or reformation of life. It may please God to recover one that is thus wounded; but while he sin in this estate hee hath received a deadly wound, and without vnfeigned repentance is already in the first step towards eternall death: for these horrors of conscience severed from the apprehension of Gods mercie in Christ, are no grace, but the flashes of hell fire, and the beginning of eternall woe. And thus we see how Christ by this sword woundeth his enemies.

Hence we are to learne sundry duties. First, how to carrie our selues towards them that after they haue heard the word preached vnto them, will rage and storme against it, and the preachers thereof, because it touched them. Wee must not despise or maligne them; but rather be moued with compassion towards them. For this their behaviour is a token they are wounded with the sword of Christ at the verie heart, and these their

ragings are nothing but strugglings before death eternall: vnlesse the Lord in mercy recover them of this deadly wound.

II. Hereby wee are let to see and know the lamentable state of the greatest number in those congregations where the word hath long bene preached; for we shall find by lamentable experience, that in those places few come to true knowledge, repentance, and obedience; but most remaine ignorant and impenitent: now this their condition is most fearefull. A terrible iudgement of God is vpon them: for when men haue long heard Gods word, and are not thereby bettered, for knowledge in mind, and obedience of life; they are thereby wounded vnto death.

This two edged sword hath alwaies his worke: it either cureth vnto life by working repentance and other graces of saluation; or woundeth vnto death them that receiue it not. Wee must therefore lament the case of such persons as remain ignorant and impenitent vnder the ministration of the word, for they are as yet dead men for ought we know, howeouer they may make a faire shew by their ciuill honestie. If any man should come into a field, & there behold many thousands slaughtered, & gushing out blood, some in the head, some in the side &c. this sight would make his heart to bleed. Well, this is true in Gods church, though it be not scene with bodily eyes: the most men are wounded with this sword of Gods word, and lye pitifully wallowing in the blood of their soules, while they continue in ignorance, in securitie and want of repentance.

III. This must admonish vs all to labour earnestly to haue further things wrought in vs, than a knowledge of our finnes, an apprehension of wrath, or horror of conscience; namely, true faith and repentance, and sound reformation of life: for without this, wee haue nothing in vs but the deadly wounds of Christs enemies. And thus much for the worke of the Word vpon the wicked.

The second worke of this two edged sword is in Gods elect; in them it hath sundrie workes, all which tend to their subiection. First, it woundeth to the quicke

(a) 1. Cor. 13. 8

(b) Acts. 24. 25

(c) Dan. 4. 6

quicke the corruption of their nature. This is one speciall cause why it is called a two edged sword, because it entereth deeply into the heart of Gods children, and giueth their corruption such a deadly blow, as it shall neuer recover againe: It killeth not the person, as it doth in the wicked: but quickening the soule, it woundeth his corruption. *Paul ministred the Gospel, (a) that the offerings vp of the Gentiles might be acceptable.* Where resembling Gods church to a sacrifice, hee giueth vs to vnderstand, that every true Christian must be slaine, though not in bodie and soule, yet in regard of sinfull motions, corrupt affections, and rellious actions, by this two edged sword of the spirit. And this is his conuersion wherby the root of corruption is stocked vp.

(a) Rom. 15.
16.

Secondly, after conuersion, this two edged sword serueth to cut off and pare away the remnants of vnbeleefe, doubting, impiety, anger, and other sinnes that be in the elect: *Every branch (saith Christ) that bringeth forth fruit in me, my father the husbandman pruneth, so make it bring forth more fruit.*

Iohn 15.

Thirdly, it serueth to keep Gods children in awe and subiection vnto him. In this vision, Christ standeth in his church, holding vp the scepter of his kingdome, which he beareth in his mouth: for this end, that though his enemies will not bee brought in subiection vnto him, yet his owne children might hereby bee kept in awe of him. He therefore that will not at the lifting vp of this two edged sword tremble and feare before Christ, is but a rebellious subiect: If there be brawling in humane societies, let the magistrat but shew himselfe with the sword of iustice, and straightway euerie one is quiet; if any resist, hee is taken for a rebell. Now shall this be effected in ciuill policie, and not be true in Christs spirituall gouernement? vnlesse therefore we wil shew our selues rebels against Christ, let vs cease from sinne and tremble before him, seeing he holdeth out vnto vs the scepter of his word.

Fourthly, this sword serueth notably for our defence and victorie in all temptations, *Eph. 6. 17. This sword of the spirit, the word of God, is one peece of the complete armour of a Christian.* Herewith did Christ vanquish Sathan. *Math. 4.*

And thus wee see how the word of God is a two edged sword, in regard of the elect.

Hence we are taught, that when we haue the doctrine of the Law and of the Gospell preached vnto vs, we must with all reuerence heare and receiue the same. Men will heare it while it is taught generally, but if it once touch their particular faults, then they cannot brooke it. But wee must suffer it to ransacke our hearts, and be glad thereof: for by this meanes our corruption is wounded, and sinne slaine in vs: our soules are conuerted vnto God, and shall be saued. If any man were diseased with a Fistula, or any other dangerous sore, hee would willingly suffer the surgeon to search and pierce into the same. Shall we do this for our bodily health, and shall we not suffer the word of God to enter into our harts to rip vp our sins, that they being wounded and subdued, wee may be healed, and so our soules liue for euer? we cannot liue vnto God, till wee die vnto sinne: and we can neuer die vnto sinne, till the same bee wounded in vs by this two edged sword. Away therefore withal nicenesse in disliking the word, when it crosseth our humour; and if wee loue eternall life, let vs then embrace it most willingly.

Saint Iohn saith further of this two edged sword; that it came out of Christs mouth. Other kings carrie their swords and scepters in their hands; but Christ beareth his in his mouth, to teach vs this speciall point, That wee must receiue no doctrine from any man, which hee hath not receiued from the mouth of Christ. For first, God revealeth his will vnto his son, & Christ deliuereth it vnto his Prophets and Apostles by the spirit, and to his ministers in their writings. They therefore must deliuer nothing vnto Gods people, but that which they haue from Christ: if they deliuer ought els, they hold not forth Christs sword: neither can it haue that powerfull effect either in the godly, or in the wicked.

And his face shone as the sunne shineth in his brightness. Here is the last branch of this description of Christ: his face is compared to the shining of the Sunne, and that in his strength: because Christ is vnto his church, as the Sunne is to the world.

And

And looke what duties the Sunne performeth vnto the world, the same duties Christ performeth vnto his Church in a more excellent manner, as their resemblance will evidently declare.

First, the Sunne in the world dispelleth night and darknesse, and maketh the day by bringing light: so Christ the Sunne of righteousness, Malach. 4. 2. sendeth down the bright beams of knowledge & grace into his church, whereby blindnesse and ignorance is taken away, 2. Cor. 4. 6. And hereby euery one, of what sort or place soeuer, is taught: first, to labor for knowledge of the will of God. A great shame it is for any to be ignorant herein: when the day commeth wee set open our windows to let in the light of the Sunne for our comfort: behold Christ Iesus is euer a shining light in his Church: Why then should we not open our hearts, that the beames of light and knowledge, which descend from him, may enter into vs, and giue vs light? Secondly, wee must hereby learne in our whole conuersation among men, to walke by this light. Wee are here but pilgrims travelling towards heauen: and the way of this miserable world is full of darkenesse: yet Christ Iesus is in the midst of his Church, shining as the Sunne in his strength, to giue the light of knowledge, whereby wee may see the right way thither. Without him there is nothing but darkenesse and wandering: his word is the light, and himselfe the day starre. Wee therefore must attend vnto him in all our affaires of this life: and in the particular duties of our lawfull callings take direction from the light which shineth from his face.

Secondly, the Sunne serueth most excellently to comfort and reuiue cold and dead starued bodies: as experience in the spring time teacheth: So Christ Iesus by the worke of his spirit conueyeth spirituall life and heat into the dead & frozen heart of man: he is of power to comfort them that mourne, to giue life to the broken hearted, and to reuiue the spirit of the humble, 1. Iay 57. 13. and for this most excellent worke may well be called the Sunne of Righteousnesse. In regard whereof wee must labour about all things to bee partakers of this life and ioy which commeth from Christ. In Winter time

marvle to stand in the sunne to comfort and warme themselves with the heat thereof. Behold Christ Iesus is the sunne of righteousness to his Church, which giueth heat and life to all the true members thereof. Wee therefore must seeke about all things to haue his blessed beames of grace to shine vpon our cold and frozen hearts, that by his spirituall heat wee may bee receiued vnto euermouring life. In this world nothing is so much regarded, as riches, honours, and pleasures: *Who will show vs any good*, is the worldlings song. But with godly David we must say, *Psalm 4. 4. Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance vpon vs*, quicken thou vs with thy spirituall life, and comfort vs with the beames of mercy. *Quest.* How may I get the gracious beames of grace and life, to come from this Sun of righteousness into my heart? *Ans.* Before a man can liue by Christ, hee must be killed in himselfe. Men doe not kill those whom they would restore to temporall life, but the Lord taketh that course. Thou therefore must suffer his two edged sword to enter into thee, yea to bee thrust vp to the hilt into thy heart, that so thy vile sinnes and corruptions may be ripped vp, and the wrath of God deserved thereby made knowne vnto thee, that in thy selfe thou mayest bee out of hope: and then and not before art thou fit to receiue comfort and life by Christ; as a man that is cold in bodie is most fit to receiue heat by cloathes and other meanes of warmenesse. Now being thus humbled in thy selfe, thou must vie the meanes which God hath ordained, to wit, the hearing, reading, and meditating in his word, with earnest prayer for grace and mercie: and then shalt thou perceiue the ioyfull beames of life shining into thy soule. If a man had all the world, and wanted this grace of life and comfort by Christ, it were but a curse vnto him: but though a man want all things else; yet by this life of grace in Christ hee is blessed for euer: and therefore about all other things men should labour for it.

Thirdly, the sunne serueth to discover all things. In the night nothing is discerned, but all things appear in one form: but when the sunne commeth forth all things are made manifest, euen the small moles

in the ayre. Even so Christ Iesus the Sun of righteousness, he seeth all things, and can discover the most hidden secrets of men: nothing is hid from the light of his countenance, so infinit is his diuine wisdom and knowledge. In regard whereof we must be moued to looke vnto all our wayes, both thoughts, words, and actions, that they bee such as Christ approueth: for though we may deceiue the world by a false glosse, yet all that we do, speake, or thinke, is naked and bare before him, he knoweth the same, and can and will reueale it.

If this were belceued and remembred, it would be a meanes to suppress much fraud and iniustice, and many grievous sinnes which is rife in the world. Men thinke if they can blear the eyes of the world, all is well, they may do what they will: but wee must thinke vpon the shining face of Christ, which discerneth and discouereth all secrets; and labour thereupon to make conscience of al our waies, yea of our secret thoughts, that God may approue the same.

Verse 17. *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: then hee laid his right hand on me, saying, Feare not, I am the first and the last.*

Verse 18. *And I am alive but I was dead: And behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: And I have the keyes of hell and of death.*

Here Saint *Iohn* describeth Christ further by other Arguments: namely, by sundry actions of his. The first whereof, is a confirmation of *Iohn*, beeing sore afraid, set down in this and the next verse. In which action note two things: First, the occasion therof: Secondly, the means of his confirmation. The occasion was *Iohns* exceeding feare, set downe in these words: *And when I saw him, I fel at his feet as dead.* The meanes of confirmation, as in the words following, *Then hee layd his hands vpon me, &c.*

For the occasion. *Iohns* feare was exceeding great, and that of death: as appeareth by Christ his confirmation: wherein he telleth *Iohn*, *That he liueth, & hath power ouer death.* In this his feare note sundry points: The cause, the effect, and the kind of this feare: For the first, The

cause was Christ his appearance in glory and maiestie vnto *Iohn*, set downe in these words, *When I saw him.* Where we learne, that sinfull men since *Adams* fall cannot abide the presence of God, ^{(a) Gen. 3.} *Adam* before his fall talked face to face with God without feare: but so soone as he had sinned, ^{(b) Gen. 3. 8.} *he fled away as the hearing of his voyce and hid himselfe among the trees of the garden.* This feare cometh by reason of mans guiltinesse before God. Hence *Moses* said vnto his wife ^{(c) Iudg. 11.} *We shall surely die because we have seene God.* 22.

First, by this, That no sinfull man can abide the presence of God, we are taught to labour to become new creatures, to haue the image of sinne defaced in vs, and the image of God restored in righteousness & true holinesse. True happinesse consisteth in fellowship with God: but we can neuer haue true fellowship with him, while we liue in our sinnes, *1. Ioh. 1. 6.* *If we say we haue fellowship with him, and walke in darknesse, we lie.* Wee therefore must labour to bee purged from our sinnes, and so his presence shall bee our ioy. The 7th.

Secondly, this feare of *Iohn* at Christs presence in glorie, teacheth vs, That the sight and presence of Gods maiestie is a most excellent meanes to humble a man, and to make him know himselfe to bee nothing in himselfe. When *Abraham* talked with God, the more he beheld the maiestie of God, the more hee humbled himselfe, confessing at last, *that hee was but dust and ashes,* Gen. 18. 27. And *Peter* by a great draught of fishes seeing but a glimmering of diuine maiestie in Christ, could not abide it, but cried out, *Depart from me for I am a sinfull man,* Luke 5. 8. And so the holy angels when they stand before the maiestie of God are said ^{(d) Iudg. 6. 1.} *to couer their faces and their feet with their wings:* to signifie, that they are nothing in regard of the exceeding maiesty of God, and in themselves vnable to behold his glorie.

Thirdly, hereby wee are taught to acknowledge Gods great goodnesse towards vs in the ministerie of the word: wherein hee vouchsafeth to speake vnto vs, not in his owne person, as hee did in mount Sina, which would be so terrible, that none could abide it; but fauorably & famili-

familiarly by the ministerie of men that are like vnto our selues. Many abuse this mercie of God, and despise the word because of the messenger: but wee must learne by this bountie of God, to receiue the word with all reuerence as from the Lord.

Lastly, in this exceeding feare of *Iohn*, who was an Apostle and a very godly and righteous man; wee learne that the most holy man that is will be astonied euen to death with the presence of Gods glorious maiestie. And if no man, bee he neuer so holy, can stand before Gods presence, much lesse can the most righteous workes of any man endure the triall of his iudgement: if his person cannot abide his presence, his workes will neuer beare his iudgement. For the person must first be approued, before the workes bee accepted. Therefore damnable is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, which teach that such as in themselves are sinfull men must stand before Gods iudgement seat, bringing with them workes of grace, as meanes of their iustification, and part of satisfaction to Gods iustice. It is a doctrine of desperation: for how can our workes bee perfectly holy, seeing our persons are but sanctified here in part? And who can thinke that the infinit iustice of God can bee satisfied by the imperfect righteousness of man.

II. point. The effect of this feare in his body, *He fell downe as dead at his feet*: This was no small feare but exceeding great, astonishing his senses, and laying him downe as dead. Physicians say, and that truly, the mind followeth the temperature of the body. But hence we may as truely say, That the body followeth the disposition of the mind; for the affections of the soule will worke vpon the bodie like vnto strong diseases. *Iohns* feare casteth his bodie into a sound: And so horror of conscience when the heart is cold will make the bodie hot, and the intrals to roule in the body. The same may bee sayd of anger, 1. Reg. 21. 4. When *Ahab* could not obtaine *Nababs* vineyard, hee laid him downe on his bed in displeasure, and was almost dead: Euen so will other affections worke vpon the bodie.

Hence wee learne that the bodies of

men being diseased must not alwayes be cured by bare physicke, but sometimes by curing of the mind and ordering of the affections: for when the distemper of the bodie ariseth from the disorder of the mind, then till the mind be wel composed and settled, physicke will little auaille.

III. point. The kind of this feare is insinuated in these words, *he fel at his feet*, Whereby the holy ghost giueth vs to vnderstand, that this was a religious reuerent feare, which hee bare to Christ: For this kind of prostrating the bodie betokeneth humilitie; and argueth a reuerent estimation of the thing feared.

Hence we are taught, when we come into the presence of Christ, we must prostrat our selues as *Iohn* did, and looke that we be stricken with a religious feare of his maiestie. If any shall thinke that Christ is now ascended into heauen, and therefore we cannot now fall down at his feet as *Iohn* did, I answer, though Christ bee now in heauen, yet hath he his feet vpon earth, at which we must fall downe. In the old testament the mercy seat was the pledge of Gods presence: and therefore it is called Gods footstool, *Psal. 99. 5.* before which the Iewes were to fall downe. Well, though the mercy seat be now taken away, yet some thing is instead thereof: For wheresoeuer Gods people assemble themselves in the name of God, there is his footstool: and therefore in the assemblies of Gods Saints we must cast down our selues before Christ Iesus, and do all duties vnto him with all feare, awe, and reuerence of his Maiestie.

This feare of *Iohn*, though it was holy, yet is it tainted with some sinne and corruption: for it was immoderate feare of death which made him thus astonished and affrighted. Whence wee learne that the most holy affections of righteous men are not perfectly holy, but mixed with imperfection according to the measure of their sanctification, which is alwayes in part in this life. Whereby it appeares that no man hath in him a filial feare of God alone, but some seruile feare (whereby wee feare God for his iudgements) is mixed therewith. And thus much for *Iohns* feare which is the occasion of his confirmation.

Now followeth the means of his confirmation in these words, *Then he layd his right hand upon me, saying feare not, I am the first and the last: and I am alive, but I was dead: and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: and I have the keyes of hell & death.*

Here note two things, first, the time when Christ vsed these meanes for *Iohns* confirmation: secondly, the means themselves. The time is noted in this word, *then*, that is, after his presence had stroken a feare in my heart, which made mee as dead; then the Lord vsed meanes to comfort me. The means of comfort and confirmation are then vsed when the party is humbled. And thus the Lord dealeth with all his seruants in the matter of their saluation: First, hee bruisheth their stonie hearts, and woundeth their sinfull soules, before hee powreth in the oyle of grace. First, a man must bee a lost sheepe, and then Christ findeth him and layeth him on his shoulders & bringeth him home. And indeed they that would find sound comfort by Christ, must first bee humbled in themselves. And the reason why men reape so little comfort either by the word or sacraments, is the want of true humiliation before they come, whereby the soule is fitted for grace and consolation.

II. point. The means vsed by Christ to confirme *Iohn*, and they are two. First, a sensible signe, *He laid his right hand upon me.* Secondly, comfortable words, *Feare not.*

Here first obserue in generall Christs gracious dealing with *Iohn*: hee vsed not one meane apart, but in great mercie; that he may thoroughly confirme *Iohn*, he giueth him both a signe and words. And so hee hath alwayes dealt with his seruants: When he called *Moses* to be a deliuerer of his people: First, hee gaue him his word; saying, *I will be with thee*, and then a signe, saying, *Vpon this mountaine shall ye serue God Exod. 3. 12.* So when he would confirme the heart of (a) *Abaz* against his enemies, hee first giues him a promise of deliuerance, vers. 7. then biddeth him aske a signe, vers. 11. And for this cause Christ in the publishing of his gospel, addeth signes & miracles vnto his word, that the truth thereof might be fully confirmed. And so in the worke of our saluation, besides his mercifull promises

which were sufficient in respect of his fidelity; hee giueth vs further signes and seales to support our weakenesse, and to confirme our faith in the assurance thereof, euen the vse of the holy Sacraments.

This teacheth vs that Christ hath a speciall care ouer his church and people, in that he doth so condescend and abase himselfe vnto their weakenesse, adding vnto his word, which of it selfe were sufficient signes and tokens, that by both he might more evidently giue that assurance which by one alone our weaknes would not so well conceiue.

Againe, in this meane of confirmation note the order which Christ vseth: First, he giueth him the signe of his presence: *Laying his hand vpon him*, to assure him of protection from all danger of death. Then hee giueth him his word, bidding him *not to feare*. Hence wee may learne that the assurance of Gods presence & protection, is a soueraigne remedie against all feare: when *Moses* feared the great calling hee was sent about, to take away that feare, the Lord saith, (b) *I will be with thee.* Hence *Dauid* saith, (c) *He wil not feare though hee walke through the valley of the shadow of death, because God is his stay and comfort.* Wherefore it concerneth vs to labour to be assured not only of Gods presence, but of his providence and special protection: And so in all dangers both of life and death, wee shal haue stay and comfort for our soules.

The Lord hauing vsed these two meanes to confirme *Iohn*, both a signe & his word: doth yet further condescend vnto *Iohns* weakenesse, and establisheth his own word by two reasons. The first in these words, *I am the first and the last.* Christ is *the first*, because nothing was or could be before him: *The last*, because nothing is or can be after him. These two titles are given vnto Christ to expresse his Godhead and eternitie, as befoire we haue heard, vers. 8. Now here they are againe set downe, to giue vs to vnderstand that he hath in his owne power the beginning and end of all things: & therefore is able to protect his seruants from all dangers, and from death: and will make good vnto them all his promises vnto eternal life,

(a) I say 7.

(b) Exod. 3. 12.
(c) Psal. 137. 4

Verse 18. *And Am hee that lieth; but I was dead; & behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: And I have the keyes of hel and of death.*

These words containe the second reason to confirme *Iohn*. And it may thus be framed by way of a distinction, *Alibough I was dead, yet I am hee that lieth*, (for so the words are) *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen*: Yea I have power ouer death and hell. This distinction containeth three parts. First, *Though I was once dead, yet I am he that lieth*. Secondly, *Though I was once dead, yet I live for evermore*. Thirdly, *Though I was once dead, yet I have the keyes of death and of hel*. Of these in order.

1. part. *And Am he that lieth, though I was dead*. Here life is ascribed to Christ in a speciall manner: For Christ lieth in a peculiar sort different from the life of other creatures. For first he hath sufficient life in himselfe, and from himselfe: Secondly, he giueth life to others. For the first, that we may better conceive it, wee must know that life is twofold, vncreated, and created. Vncreated life is the life of God whereby God lieth: This life is eternall and infinit in it selfe, & from it selfe. Now as Christ is God he lieth this vncreated life: which is all one with the godhead. Againe, created life is twofold. The first is naturall preserved by means of meat and drinke. The second is spirituall, both begun & continued by means of the immediat operation of Gods spirit, whereby wee haue fellowship with God. And this spirituall life is more perfect than the naturall. Now Christ lieth not the naturall life, but as hee is God lieth the vncreated life; and as hee is man he lieth the spirituall life, his body and soule hauing all their subsisting and sustentation in the second person in Trinitie: and therefore hee hath in himselfe most absolute and perfect life, and so lieth of himselfe.

Secondly, Christ is here sayd to live, because, hee *gives life vnto men*: and that two wayes: First, as he is God; and so he giueth life to al good and bad: For *in him every thing lieth, moveth, and hath his being*, *Act. 17. 28*. Secondly, as hee is mediator God and man; and so he giueth spi-

rituall life vnto his church and people. Hence he saith to his Disciples, *Because I live, ye shall live also*, *Ioh. 14. 19*. For look as Christ died not for himselfe, but for vs that we might not die eternally: So hee lieth now in heaven the spirituall life, not for himselfe alone, but for vs, that wee might live that spirituall life in and by him eternally. And therefore our life is said, *To be hid with God in Christ*. And for this cause in the Sacrament, we do eat the body and drinke the blood of Christ really by the mouth of faith, that we might know that our life is to bee fetched from him. For as wee receiue grace from his grace; so we receiue life from his life.

Hereby wee are taught to seeke for this spirituall life at Christs hands: that we may say with *Paul*, *I live not now, but Christ lieth in me*, *Gal. 2. 21*. and that *Our life is hid in Christ*, as in a head and roote. For hee lieth in heaven that wee might live by him: our care must not bee so much for our temporall life, which is but a vapour and like a fleeting shadow, as for this spirituall life which is eternal. But the practise of this dutie is rare to bee found, though the omission of it bee a grievous sinne. Mens whole care is for temporall life: few thinke on this, how to procure to themselves this spirituall life by Christ; though he haue said, *I live that you may live in me*. This appeareth by their common practise: They will goe ten, twenty, yea an hundred miles to provide means for their bodily preservation; and yet will scarce goe one or two miles for the means of their saluation for ever. The cause thereof is, the hardnesse of mens hearts, which are not touched for their sins, nor feelee the smart and weight thereof. This we may see plainly in the woman of Samaria: For when Christ sate at the well of *Jacob* talking with her, *Iohn 4.* and telling her that he was the well of life, of whose water who so ever drank should never thirst, she did nothing but cavill with him: But when he laid to her heart her principall sins, then she left off cavilling, and in reverence, and some beginning of faith, *Acknowledged him to be the Messias*. Even so let the minister say vnto his people, he can bring them to the water of life; they will nothing regard, but cavill at the doctrine of the Gospell, till their finnes bee touched, and their soules humbled by

the sight thereof. Wherefore if we would haue our hearts fit to receiue spiritual life by Christ; we must first labour to haue a sence of our sinnes, and to feare Gods wrath due vnto vs for the same. Hereby we shall bee weined from the dangerous loue of earthly things, and our soules shal be rauished with desire of Christ Iesus. Hee is the well of life; and if once wee could feelee a parching heat in our soules, by reason of our sinnes, then would wee thirst & neuer be at rest til we had drunk our fill, and diued our selues in his sauing merits. This natural life is but vanishing, and therefore wee must labour for this spirituall life by Christ which is eternall. This will comfort vs in all distresse: and take from vs the feare of death, of hell, and all danger.

The second part of the distinction: *Though I was dead yet behold I liue for euermore, Amen.* This part is vttered & propounded by two notes to bee obserued. First, by a note of certaintie, *Amen.* Secondly, by a note of attention, *Behold.* The note of certaintie, (*Amen*) serueth to assure vs that this is an infallible truth which Christ affirmeth of himselfe: saying, *I liue for euermore.* The note of attention which is prefixed, *Behold,* serueth to stirre vp Iohns mind, and the mind of euery one of vs, to a serious consideration of this which Christ saith, *I liue for euermore.* And because it pleaseth Christ to propound this point in this manner, let vs a little stand thereon, and herein consider two points. First, in respect of what nature Christ is said to *liue for euermore.* Secondly, for what end hee liueth for euermore. For the first, No doubt as Christ is the mediator of the church, *He liueth for euermore:* and therefore this must bee vnderstood of Christ, in regard of both his natures, godhead and manhood. In respect of his godhead, he is coeternall with the father and with the holy ghost, liuing of himselfe that vncreated and eternall life, which is all one with the godhead, being eternall, without beginning or ending. Secondly, he liueth for euermore as he is man: for after his death he ascended vp to heauen, where in full glorie hee enioyeth immediat fellowship with the godhead: for in him dwelleth the fulnesse of the godhead bodily; his manhood being wholly and immediately sustained by his

godhead.

II. Point. The end for which Christ liueth for euermore, is to giue eternall life to his church, and to euery true member thereof. So Saint Iohn saith, *This is (a) the testimony of God, euen the father, that he hath giuen vs life euermore, & this life is in that his sonne.* And here Christ must be considered of vs, as the head of his church, as the roote and ground of our saluation, and the fountaine of all our happinesse. For as the root of a tree liueth not for it selfe, but for the bodie and for all the branches: euen so Christ Iesus, he hath eternall life in him, not for himself alone, but that he may conuey the same to al his members. Yea, wee must consider Christ as the common treasury & storehouse of all true felicitie: wherein life eternall is laid vp for al the members of his church. For which cause hee saith, (b) *His flesh is meat indeed: & who soeuer eateth his flesh & drinketh his blood shall liue for euermore,* to giue vs to vnderstand, that his manhood hath quickning vertue in it: Yet not of it self, or by it self, but as it is the manhood of the son of God. For from the godhead it receiue this quickning power, to giue eternall life vnto the church. And here the means must be considered, by which Christ giueth life vnto his church: namely, by vertue of that mysticall vnion which is betweene him and euery member of his church. Which vnion is thus caused: God the father giueth Christ vnto his church, and to euery one that is to be saued by Christ; and that really and truly according to the tenor of the covenant, in which he hath promised to giue Christ with all his benefits to euery one that beleueeth. The manner and order of this gift is this: Whole Christ God & man is giuen to euery beleueer; euen as he is mediator. And yet the godhead of Christ is not giuen with the manhood, but only the vertue and operation of the godhead in the manhood; by which the manhood is made able to merit for the beleueer. But the manhood of Christ is giuen both for substance, & in regard of all benefits that are conueyed to man by it, as iustification and redemption; as truly as lands and goods are giuen of man to man. And when God giueth Christ to any, hee doth withall giue vnto the same partie the spirit of Christ: for hee that hath

(a) 1. Ioh. 5. 11

(b) Ioh. 6. 54.
55.

hath part in Christ, hath part in his spirit: and this spirit createth in his heart the instrument of faith, by which Christ giuen of the father, is receiued and apprehended; both his bodie and blood, and the efficacy and the benefits therof. Christ is not receiued in imagination, as men receiue things by conceit in the braine: but as he is giuen of the father, namely in the word and sacraments really and truly, though spiritually. And the same spirit that worketh this faith, doth knit the beleuer vnto Christ really, though mystically, making him one with Christ, so as Christ is the head; and the beleuer a member. And thus is this mysticall coniunction wrought, from whence proceedeth this eternall life.

The benefits that come from this mysticall coniunction are these.

I. Hereby a beleuer begins in this world to lue eternall life: for by the worke of his spirit, Christ maketh that man that is thus vnited vnto him, to begin to die vnto all sinne, and to lue vnto him spiritually, as himselfe liueth.

II. Hence commeth the resurrection of the bodie: for this coniunction being once begun, remaineth eternall, and is neuer wholly broken off, no not from the body, while it is consumed to dust & ashes. Look as in the Winter season the sap returneth to the root of the tree, and then all the branches seeme as they were dead: but when Spring time commeth, by vertue of the sunne the sap ascendeth and maketh them fresh and green again: euen so, the bodies of Gods children haue their Winter season, while they lye dead and rotten: but yet by vertue of their vnion & coniunction with Christ, at the last day shal life be conueyed from Christ Iesus vnto them, whereby they shal be raised to life.

III. Hence commeth eternall life to euery beleuer: that is, glorie and blisse in bodie and soule in heauen for ever and ever: for being once begun (as it is in this world) it is neuer dissolued. And thus we see how Christ conueyeth eternall life vnto his members.

The words bearing this sence, do containe in them the foundation of two maine articles of our beleefe, namely, the resurrection of the bodie, and life euermore.

to vs, by vertue of our vnion with Christ; for he *liueth for ever to giue life to vs*. And this is the ground of all true ioy: as wee may see in Iob, who in the middelt of his miserie staied himselfe on this, *That hee knew his redeemer liued, and that hee should rise againe, and behold him with those same eyes, whereunto he saw other creatures*, Iob. 19. 25. 26.

2. Againe, if Christ liue in heauen to giue vnto vs eternall life, then must wee learn to haue our conuersation in heauen with Christ: for where our life is, there should our conuersation bee. Now that our conuersation may bee with him, wee must often seriously consider with our selues of this euermore life which Christ there keepeth in store for vs: and for this cause principally doth Christ here say, *Behold, I liue for ever*.

3. This also must moue vs to put all our affiance in him, and to place all our ioy and reioicing in him. Men haue most regard to that part of their body, by which the whole body and euery member liueth. Well, wee professe our selues to bee members of Christ, and in him is hid our spirituall life: wee therefore must set our hearts and affections on him especially.

The third part of the distinction is this: *Though I was dead yet I haue the keyes of death & of hell*. Here we must not imagin that hell is a bodily place kept with lock and key, and dores, as mens dwelling houses are: that cannot bee proued by any place of Gods word. Neither yet that the torments therof are bodily, such as bee inflicted in this world: but rather they are spirituall, beeing the apprehension and feeling of Gods wrath and vengeance, whose iousie burnes like fire. But Christ in this phrase borroweth a comparifon from stewards of great houses, who at their installing into their stewardships, haue the keyes of all things giuen vnto them. Which giuing of the keyes is a token of regiment and authority bestowed vpon them. And the meaning is this, That Iesus Christ though he once died, yet by his death did vanquish hell and death, and hath obtained full power and dominion ouer them both for euermore.

Hence arise sundry instructions: first, that power and authoritie to forgiue sinnes

finnes properly, belongeth onely vnto Christ. No meere creature hath this power; for hee that can forgive finnes, must bee able to take away the punishments of sinne, namely, hell and death, which none can doe but Christ alone, who onely hath the keyes thereof. And to say, that a man can properly forgive finnes, is to say, that a man hath power in himselfe ouer hell and death. And therefore the priesthood of the church of Rome is full of blasphemie, who take vpon them properly to pronounce vnto men the pardon of their finnes of themselves: and they deride the custom of reformed churches, who from God pronounce the pardon of finnes vnto them that repent.

Secondly, hereby wee are taught to reuerence Christ, and to performe vnto him all due honor and loyall obedience. If we neuer haue done this heretofore, wee must now begin; and if wee haue done it, we must endeavour to do it more. For Christ hath the keyes of hell and death, hee can open the gates thereof at his pleasure, and cast thither whome hee will. Many deceiue themselves through their false conceit of Christ, they thinke not of him as of a Iudge, but as a Sauour onely: they make him all of mercy and pitie, and thereby they take occasion to goe on in sinne. But wee must consider, that Christ is likewise a righteous iudge, who hath the power of hell and death in his hands, and therefore wee must not flatter our selues in our euill wayes, but strue to please him continually with fear and trembling, least by our finnes we stir vp his wrath against vs, and cause him to cast vs into hell, whence is no redemption.

Thirdly, this is a matter of great comfort vnto al those in Gods church, that in this life vnfaignedly cleaue vnto Christ: and especially in time of affliction and temptation, and at the houre of death; for Christ hauing the keyes of hell & death, is able to keepe them from hel, and from the sting of death. And this hee will doe because they trust in him, for hee hath promised it. If this were alwayes founding in our ears, it would minister endlesse ioy into our souls against the seruile feare of hell and death.

Verf. 19. Write the things which thou hast seene, and the things which are, and the things which shall come hereafter.

Here *S. Iohn* propoundeth a second action of Christ. For hauing confirmed *Iohn* against his great feare, hee giueth him a commandement to write the things which he had seene, &c. This commandement was given to *Iohn* in the eleuenth verse, and is here againe repeated for these causes: First, that *Iohn* might see the special care of Christ ouer his church that he still continueth a prouident head thereof, for their good estate after his ascension. Secondly, that Gods church in all ages may vnderstand, that it is necessarie men should know the estate of the church to be subiect vnto troubles, that thereby they may better arme themselves against the euils to come. Thirdly, that *Iohn* might be fully assured of his calling, to write and publish this booke. Fourthly, that Gods church in all ages might be out of doubt, that this booke is no deuice of man, but a booke of God, and part of holy Scripture reuealed from Christ to *Iohn* for the good of his church. If it bee said: though Christ did faithfully reueale his will, yet *Iohn* might erre in publishing it. *Ans.* As Christ deliuered this to *Iohn*, so hee receiued and published it faithfully, without all fault either in matter or manner: for wee must make a difference betweene the Prophets and Apostles, and all other teachers. As the Prophets in former times, so the Apostles in the new Testament were called immediately by Christ, & had such speciall assistance of Gods spirit, that they could not erre, when they propounded by preaching or writing any doctrine of Christ vnto the church of God: this appeareth by the promises of Christ made vnto them, *Lu. 10. 16. He which heareth you, heareth me, and hee which refuseth you, refuseth me: and he which refuseth me, refuseth him that sent me.* Again, *Mat. 10. 20. It is not you which speake, but the spirit of your father speaking in you,* *Ioh. 14. 26. he promiseth to send his spirit to be their comforter, which shal teach them all things: yea, to lead them into all truth,* *Ioh. 16. 13.* Which promise some apply to al gods ministers; but if we marke the circumstances thereof, we shal see

(2) A2, 15, 18

see that properly it agreeth to the Apostles: for though in others the certaintie hereof cannot be affirmed, yet in them it may: for which cause, in the counsell at Ierusalem thus they write vnto the churches: *It seemed good to (a) the holy ghost and to vs*; as being allured of the certaine direction of the holy ghost: which no ministers euer since could say, being subiect to errour both in speaking and writing. This distinction must bee held for the certaintie of our faith in the points of Religion, and for our assurance of the faithfull penning and publishing of this booke. And thus much of the causes of this repetition.

In the words of this commandement is contained the diuision of this whole booke, *Write the words which thou hast seen*: that is, set downe what I haue shewed thee in this vision. *And which are*; that is, all things which I reueale vnto thee touching the present estate of the Church, *And which are to come hereafter*: that is, those things which concerne the future estate of the church to the end of the world, as I will reueale vnto thee. Thus then is the whole booke distinguished. I. It containeth things touching the present estate of the Church in *Iohns* daies. II. It entreateth of things which concern the future estate thereof from *Iohns* time to the end of the world.

The 7th.

Hence obserue the lawfulnessse of the art of Logicke: for diuisions are lawfull, (else the holy ghost would not here haue vsed them) and so by proportion are other arguments of reasoning: and therefore that art which giueth rules of direction for the right vse of these arguments is lawfull and good. Those men then are farre deceived, who account the arts of Logicke and Rhetoricke to be friuolous and vnlawfull, and in so saying, they condemne the practise of the holy ghost in this place.

Verse 20. *The mysterie of the seven starres which thou sawest in my right hand; and the seven golden candlesticks: is this: The seven starres are the seven Angels of the Churches, & the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches.*

This is the third action of Christ: namely the interpretation of the Vision

in the principall parts thereof; which he expoundeth for these causes: First, *Iohn* in this businesse was to shew himselfe a Prophet of God, by declaring the present and future estate of Gods church. Now the principall part of a Prophet is to expound visions or dreames reuealed either to himselfe or to others; as we may see in *Daniel* and the rest of the prophets. Secondly, that *Iohn* might bee encouraged in the publishing of this booke, and of the things reuealed vnto him: For *Iohns* calling respected the Church of God. And when hee should perceiue these visions to concerne the Churches; this would stirre vp his diligence, in obseruing, and penning the things reuealed.

Now Christ expoundeth not the whole vision, but two principall things therein; namely, what was meant by the seven stars; to wit, *the seven Angels or the seven ministers of the Churches*. And what was meant by the seven golden candlesticks: namely, *The seven Churches themselves*. The reasons why both were so called, we haue shewed before, with the vse thereof. Here onely I will obserue these three points: First, why Christ in the interpretation of his vision doth not expound the whole, but onely two principall parts thereof: This he doth for these causes: First, because he hath giuen vnto his church the gift of interpretation, which he would haue them to exercise about this vision: For if hee had expounded every part himselfe, then he had left herein no matter to his Church, whereabout shee might exercise her gift. Secondly, to prouoke Gods ministers especially, with other members of his church, vnto all diligence in studying this and other parts of Scripture. For if all things were easie and plaine, then men would grow carelessse in reading and searching out the knowledge of Gods word. Thirdly, to stirre vp in every Reader of this booke an earnest and hartie desire to vnderstand the same. Fourthly, to excite all his seruants to prayer and inuocation vpon God for his grace, that they may, with reading the Scripture vnderstand the true meaning thereof.

II. point. Note here, the ministers of the churches are called Angels. What these Angels are, appeareth in the chapters

ters following; to wit, the pastors and ministers of these seven churches of Asia. So *Math. 11. 10. Iohn Baptist* is called Christs Angell or messenger, whereby we haue good light for the expounding of a place in *Paul, 1. Cor. 11. 10.* saying, *That the woman ought to haue power ouer her head,* that is, be couered, *because of the Angels.* Where, by Angels may well be vnderstood the preachers and ministers of the Gospell. And the reason of that precept may be this: Among the Corinthians the couering of the head was not as it is with vs, a token of preheminnence and superioritie, but a signe of subiection. And therefore the Apostle would haue the women of Corinth, when they came into the congregation, to haue their heads couered according to the custome of their country in other assemblies, to signifie their submission and reuerence vnto the ministerie of the Gospell.

The yf,

Whereas ministers are the Lords Angels and ambassadours: hence we gather that euery minister of the Gospell must carry himselfe as the messenger of the Lord. Messengers haue regard of two things; of the matter of their message, & of their manner of deliuerie, that they speake all which they are commanded; and in such order as their Lord and master would haue it spoken, or speake it himselfe if he were present: and hee that faileth in either of these, may iustly be challenged of vnfaithfulnesse. The minister therefore being Christs messenger, must deliuer the whole will of Christ alone vnto his people: as also in that manner which Christ approoueth, & would himselfe obserue, if he were present. Now can we once imagine, that Christ would deliuer his will, partly in English, partly in Latine, and other languages, or intermingle with the testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles, the sentences of Fathers, of Philosophers, Poets, and other writers? Those therefore that in this sort dispence Christs Gospell, do hereby bewray vnfaithfulnesse in their deliuey. Indeed this is counted the learned kind of preaching: But it is not that manner which Christ approoueth. And besides, if this kind of teaching may take place, it will bring in as great Barbarisme, in regard of true Diuinitie, as was among the Schoolemen, when Gods word was

wholly turned vnto needlesse disputation, yea it would shortly banish the Gospell out of this land.

I I I. point. Note the phrase which the holy ghost vteth: he saith not, *The seven starres* signifie the seven Angels, but *Are* the seven Angels: and the seven candlesticks *Are* the seven churches; giuing to the signe the name of the thing signified. Wherein wee haue a good warrant for our exposition of that phrase in the Sacrament: *This bread is my body: this cup is my blood:* Which the Papists vnderstand properly of the very body & blood of Christ by real transmutation. But as these seven starres are said to be seven ministers, because they did signifie the seven ministers: so is the bread called the bodie of Christ, because it signifieth and representeth his bodie, and the cup his blood. And as it is absurd to say, the seven ministers were indeed seven starres, because they are so called: so it is absurd to hold the bread in the Sacraments to be really Christs bodie, or the wine his blood, because it is so called. And thus much of the third action of Christ in the interpretation of this Vision.



THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Verse 1 Vnto the Angell of the Church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven starres in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlestickes.



In this Chapter & in the next, is contained the fourth action of our Sauour Christ: wherein he giueth seven particular commandements to *Iohn*, to write vnto the seven Churches of Asia, and to send vnto them seven letters or Epistles. The first of which commandements is expressed in the beginning of this first verse: *Vnto the Angell of the Church of Ephesus write:* Then after followeth

with the Epistle, *These things saith hee, &c.* continuing to the eight verse. First, for the commandement: the party to whom *Iohn* must write, is the *Angel*: which word may be expounded two wayes: either to signifie the minister or pastor of the particular church of Ephesus, and so it is commonly taken of the most; or els it may betoken the company of the ministers, teachers, & gouernors of the church of Ephesus: for therein were many pastors & gouernors, as appeareth *Act. 20. 28.* where *Paul* calleth together the Bishops (as the word signifieth) and giueth them charge ouer their particular flocks. Now in Scripture the name of one person taken collectiue, oftentimes signifieth the whole multitude, as *Exod. 4. 23. Israel is my son, even my first borne.* Where the whole bodie of the people of Israel is called by the name of one man. And so though Antichrist bee not one particular man, but a state and company of men in the succession of Popes: yet is that whole estate noted by the speciall name of one man: as that (a) *Antichrist; that man of sin; and son of perdition.* Thus we see how the word *Angell* may be taken: and whether wee vnderstand it of one man, or of the whole company of elders, it is not much materiall.

In this particular commaundement note two points: First, that Christ his intent is to write to the whole Church of Ephesus, as appeareth *Chap. 1. 11.* where *Iohn* is commaunded to write in a booke, and send it to the Churches: as also by the conclusion of this Epistle, where it is said, *Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches:* and yet he directeth his Epistle not to the whole church, but particularly to the angell or pastor thereof. This hee doth for two causes: First, to intimate vnto this minister his *Autie*, which stood in two things: In teaching the contents of this Epistle vnto the whole church: & in becoming a patterne & example to them all, of doing the things therein required. Secondly, because either much good or much euill comes to euerie particular church by the ministers thereof; such is the efficacie of his place and calling. If he be faithful he bringeth great good to the church: if vnfaithfull, exceeding great hurt; as might easily be proued by many

examples in al ages. Now Christ writeth to the angel of this church, that he might be a meanes of much good vnto them al, by exciting them to the practise of all good duties required in this Epistle.

I I. point. Among all the churches of Asia, Christ writeth first to the church of Ephesus: not for that this church had authoritie ouer the rest (for they were all candlesticks, and all of gold) but because Ephesus was the mother citie, far exceeding the rest in riches and estimation. Whereby Christ giueth vs to vnderstand, that his will is, that those people, towntes and cities which excell others in estimation and wealth, should also goe before them in knowledge, obedience, and other graces of God. And so answerably should it bee with particular persons: They which excell others for outward reputation & temporall blessings, ought to go before them in spirituall graces, as godlinesse and religion. Those which shall faile herein, & suffer others that are farre their inferiours for outward things, to go before them in spiritual graces, shall find it true to their shame before men, but especially at the tribunall seat of Iesus Christ.

Thus much for the commandement. Now followeth the Epistle it self, which containeth three parts (as all ordinarie Epistles do.) A preface, a proposition, and the conclusion. The preface is in these words, *These things, saith he, that holdeth the seven starres in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlestickes.* The proposition and conclusion, in the verses following. The preface is borrowed from the former chapter, verse 16. and 13. Where also it was handled. The intent of Christ herein, is to draw this Church to a reuerent adoration of his person; and to cause in them a greater care to embrace and obey his admonition. This appeareth by that twofold action which hee auoucheth of himselfe, to wit, his holding the seven starres in his right hand, and his walking in the midst of the seven golden candlestickes: by the first whereof is signified his power in protecting and gouerning his ministers. And by the second is noted, his presence in the midst of his church, guiding and blessing his ministers with all the members thereof. As if

(a) 1. Theff. 2.

Verse 7.

he had said: If I be hee that haue power to protect and gouerne, that am present also to blesse and direct both ministers and people; then my admonitions are to be reuerenced and obeyed.

In this preface note two special points. First, that Christ here againe repeateth that which was before deliuered touching his presence in his church, and his mightie power and providence ouer the same in protecting, guiding, and blessing both minister and people. By which repetition hee would giue vs to vnderstand, the speciall weight and moment of this point, to wit, that it ought to bee ingrauen in the hearts of euery one in Gods church. And indeed till we be perswaded thereof, wee shall neuer learne religion soundly. The ground of true religion is this: To take the true God for our God: and Christ Iesus for our redeemer: and it consisteth not in a twimming notion hereof in the braine, but in the sure perswasion of the heart, which we neuer haue till we be resolu'd both of Christs presence with vs: and of his providence ouer vs, for our blessing and defence.

The point. In this preface also note, that the perswasion of Christs presence and speciall providence in his church, is a notable meanes to draw vs on to all good duties; for thereby Christ would perswade both the ministers and people of Ephesus, to receiue and embrace this his Epistle. And no doubt hee that is indeed perswaded hereof, cannot but bee moued to walke before God in all holinesse and obedience: as did *Enoch*, *Abraham*, and all the godly patriarkes. Thus much for the preface.

Verse 2. *I know thy workes and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not forbear them which are euill, and hast examined them which say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.*

Here beginneth the second part of this Epistle, to wit, the proposition; containing the substance and matter of the whole Epistle. This proposition hath two points. First, a commendation of this church, in the second and third verses. Secondly, a rebuke and reprehension, in the fourth verse. The commen-

dation is first generall in these words: *I know thy workes.* Then more particular, for speciall duties & actions, in the words following, *and thy labour, and patience, &c.* For the first, *I know thy workes*: many doe expound this of workes of mercie and liberaltie: but that will not so well stand; for he saith to euery Church, *I know thy workes*; and yet some of them are blamed for want of these good workes. By *workes* then is meant, the *wayes*, that is, the practises and dealings of the whole church: as well of ministers as people, in all their affaires. Also by *knowledge* here wee must vnderstand a *knowledge* that goeth with approbation, as may appeare by comparing this with the fourth verse, whither it hath relation: for thus they must goe, *I know thy workes, and approve of them: and yet I haue something against thee.* So that his meaning is, *I know thy workes*, that is, *all thy wayes and dealings in thy life and conuersation are manifest vnto me; and I doe generally approve of them.*

Here first in this testimonie of his knowledge, Christ ministrerh a remedie against secret sinnes and offences. The theefe, the murderer, and adulterer wait for the night wherein to attempt their shamefull practises: The tradesman in secret falsifieth his weights, and minglith his wares: among most men fraud, oppression, & iniustice do abound: and all because they thinke, that if men see not, all is wel: as *David* saith, the wicked man saith, *God shall not see, hee will not regard.* But if men could thinke and be perswaded of this, that Christ *seeth and knoweth all their wayes*, it would cause them to make conscience not only of grosse sins, but euen of their hidden and secret offences.

Secondly, whereas this knowledge is ioyned with approbation, it may be demanded how this can stand with the iustice of God, to approve of that which is not answerable to the tenour of his law, as the best workes of the most righteous man are not, being stayned with some corruption, *Isay 64. 6. Answ.* The Gospell, which is another part of Gods wil, revealeth more vnto vs than euer the law could do: namely, that if a man bee in Christ, to him there is no condemnation; and that God will accept his true desire and endeuour to please him for the

the deed it selfe, 2. Cor. 8. 12. And thus according to the tenor of the Gospell Christ approueth of their workes in this place, though they were not able to abide the rigor of his law. But a Papist wil here reason thus: If a righteous mans workes be approued of God, then they are no sinnes (for God will not approue of any thing that is sinfull) and if his workes bee no sinnes, then he may fulfill the law; and so be iustified by his workes. *Answe.* That which Christ approueth simply, hath no sinne in it; but here he onely approueth of their workes in part, namely, so farre forth as they came from the worke of his spirit in them: but as they proceed from the will of the worker, which is in part corrupt, they are not free from the stain of sin; and so he approueth them not. Again, workes of grace are approued of Christ with the pardon of sinne: for accepting of the person, he remitteth the faults that bee in his good workes, and so onely approueth his owne worke in him. And so here wee must conceiue of his approbation of their workes, to wit, as proceeding from his spirit, and hauing the faults thereof remitted in his owne merit.

The speciall commendation of this church is for particular actions: The first whereof is *diligent labour*: which is an excellent worke especially in a minister of Gods word, to be painfull in his particular calling, for the faithfull instruction & godly regiment of his particular charge. Hence Paul saith, 1. Tim. 5. 17. *He that laboureth in the word and doctrine, is principally worthy double honor.* And herein Paul matcheth, yea preferreth himselfe before other Apostles, *That hee laboured more abundantly in the ministerie of the Gospel, than they all,* 1. Cor. 15. 10. Hence wee learne that the worke of the ministerie, if it bee done as it ought, is a worke full of great paines and labour, contrary to the common opinion of men, who think that the life of the minister is full of ease, and his calling a matter of nothing, such as may bee done with the turning of the hand: but here the iudgement of Christ is otherwise, who vseth not thus to approue a light or idle worke.

Secondly, this commendation of diligence in the minister must admonish all christians that desire to be approued of

Christ, to giue all diligence to learne and know the will of God, that they may doe the same. And here a common fault is to be reprobued: many will heare, but where is their labour to grow in knowledge & in grace? that is wanting: which is the cause of such fruitlesse hearing as is common in the world. For earthly things men refuse no paines: but Gods heauenly knowledge and graces are not regarded. What a shame is this that men should bestow their strength and wit about base and transitorie things, and yet neglect the main good which concernes their souls for euer.

Thirdly, the ministers diligence in teaching, must prouoke conscience of obedience in the hearers; that is the end of his work, without this he spends his strength in vaine, and therefore with the Apostle they must indeuor in all things to keep a good conscience before God and all men, Act. 24. 16.

The second thing which Christ here commends, is patience in bearing the crosse, which doth vsually accompanie the Gospell of Christ. And this indeed is praise worthy in the angel of this church; for herein hee goeth before sundry worthy prophets: *Jeremie* was marvellous impatient, for the mocking of the people: (a) And though *Jonas* had bin schooled in the Whales belly, yet when all things went not according to his mind in the destruction of Niniue, he became exceeding discontent.

(a) Jer. 20. 14
25.

Herein must all the ministers of the Gospell become followers of the Angel of this church. While they labour in the Gospel of God, they must possesse their soules with patience, and make knowne to all men their meeke and mild spirit. Yea euery Christian in the profession of religion must learne to practise this due tie *Lu. 8. 16.* The good ground receiueth the seed, and bringeth forth fruit: but how? *with patience*: Neither can we possibly attaine to eternall life, vnlesse wee arme our selues with patience to bear the crosse: for whosoever will liue godly must suffer afflictions, 2. Tim. 3. 12. *Through many tribulations we must enter in to heauen,* Act. 14. 22.

The Vse.

II. Againe here obserue how Christ ioyneth labour and patience together: this hee doth for two causes. First, to let

2 Thes. 2. 18.

we see the fruit of sinne which God hath set on the labour of man. Before the fall, the labour of mans calling was practised without all trouble or paines; but since mans fall, the best callings haue their crosses and vexations, which are the punishments of mans transgressions. Secondly, to shew the malice of Sathan against the good progresse of the Gospell, Paul saith to the Thessalonians, *He would haue come to them, but Sathan did hinder him.* Hee seeketh the trouble and sorrow of the minister, not only by stirring vp persecution, but by keeping his people from profiting by his ministerie: and therefore euery minister had need to take paines with patience in his calling.

And as Christ ioyneth together labour and patience in the worke of the ministerie: so should euery Christian after this direction ioine patience with his paines in the duties of his particular calling, whether it be in church, commonwealth, or family. For looke what is the estate of the minister in his place, such shall be the estate of euery child of God in his. This therefore they must doe: first seeke to know the duties of their particular calling, and therein labour and take paines with all good conscience: Then considering the crosse doth accompany godly diligence, they must labour to ioine patience with their diligence, for their continuance in welldoing euen vnder the crosse. And for attaining of this patience, they must set before them the promises of Gods blessing and protection while they so continue; not suffering themselves to be dismayed by any affliction. And if we shal thus walke in the duties of our particular places painefully and with patience, wee shall haue our commendation of Christ Iesus and his blessed reward, which farre surpasseth the praise of men, and their rewards. But on contrarie, if we walke in our callings negligently, or else forsake them because of afflictions: or be impatient in our labour, we shall loose our reward, and vndergo the rebuke of Christ, which is worse than all outward euils that can befall vs.

The third speciall worke for which Christ commendeth this church is, seueritie shewed against wicked men: in

these words, *And how shon canst not beare them which are euill.* By euill men, he meaneth such as liued offensively, and maintained manifest errors & heresies. These she could not beare, but iudged them as burdens: and therefore sought to disburden her selfe of them.

Hence we may gather, that it is a necessary thing for euery church to be purged of euill men. The church of God in all ages hath put in practise this worke. So soone as Cain had slaine his brother Abel (a) *God cast him out from his face,* as appeareth by his own complaint, to wit, from that particular place where Adam and his familie worshipped God. When false prophets and Idolaters did arise among the Israelites, the Lord commaundeth (b) *That they should be killed and taken from among them.* And therefore he saith to Ieremie, (c) *If thou turne and repent, I will bring thee againe, and if thou take away thy previsions from the vile, thou shalt be according to my word.* 1. Cor. 5. 4. 5. Paul commaundeth in the name of Christ, that *the incestuous man bee deliuered vnto Sathan,* the church purged of that old leauen, & that wicked man put from among them, vers. 13. Besides the euidence of these testimonies, some reasons may bee added to prooue the necessitie of this separation. First, God will be worshipped in an holy manner; and they that worship God must be purged and sanctified; but euill men defile Gods worship, and therefore they ought to be seuered frō the church. Secondly, least the whole church bee infected with the contagion of their doctrine, or the infection of their life: for as leauen sowreth the whole lump, so will euil men defile the whole church. Thirdly, they are burdens to the church, and therefore must be cast out. For the church should be eased of euery burden.

This doctrine is the truth of God, & ought to be practised of Gods Church. Whereby we may see a common fault in the most congregations among vs: wherein all that will are admitted not onely to the hearing of the word, but also vnto the Lords table, hand ouer head without restraint, as though euery man were a good & sound christian: Whereas experience sheweth, that many be ignorant, many contemners of the Gospell, many Saboath breakers, drunkards and blasphemers

The Vse.

(a) Gen. 4. 10.

(b) Deut. 17. 7.

(c) Jer. 18. 19.

phemers, all which ought to bee barred from the sacraments: and in that respect severed from the church as burdens.

Secondly, hence we may gather, that Christ hath giuen to his church a power iudiciall, to suspend euill men from the sacraments, and to excommunicate them from the outward fellowship of the church: for els he would not haue commended this minister with his church for the execution of this power. Thereasons alledged to the contrarie, are of no force. I. Say they, the parable, *Matth. 13. 30.* alloweth the growing together of tares and wheate till haruest: and therefore euill men must bee suffered in the church without seperation. *Ans.* In that parable Christ speaketh not of any particular purging of the Church by Ecclesiasticall iurisdiction; but of the vniuersall purging of his whole church by his holy Angels in the end of the world: for there the field doth not signifie any particular church, but the whole world: and the seruants are not men, but Angels, that must gather together all both good and bad in the end of the world, to the last iudgement. Againe they alledge, *Lu. 14. 23. Compell them in the high wayes to come into this supper.* Here (say they) all must be brought in, but none must bee excluded the societie of the church. *Ans.* Christ speaketh not of compelling men vnto the sacraments, but vnto the ministry of the word, wherto men must be caused to subiect themselves: which hindereth nothing why the vngodly should not bee debarred from the sacraments, which are the seale of Gods mercy in Christ, ordained only for such as repent and beleue.

Q. Seeing this seperation must be made, how farre forth may wee conuerse with those that are openly euill & offensive either for life or doctrine? *Ans.* Euill men must be considered diuers wayes: first, as they bee members of some commonwealth, of some citie, or incorporation: secondly, as they are members of some particular church by tolleration. In the first regard, it is lawfull for vs to conuerse with them, I. for outward dealings & ciuill affairs, as bargaining, buying and selling, &c. II. wee may maintaine outward euill peace with them. So *Paul* commandeth the Romans (a) to haue peace with a

as it would stand with faith & good conscience. III. In this ciuill conuersing with the wicked wee must performe all duties of outward courtesie & loue vnto them, so far forth as it doth not dishonor God, or hinder the good of the church. And therefore *Paul* commandeth vs to be (a) *(4. Tit. 2. 38)* *sober and courteous shewing all meeknesse vnto all men; euen to euill men, as the reason following sheweth: For we our selues were* *(1. Cor. 5. 14)* *in time past vnwise, disobedient, deccied &c.* and then were we euill.

Secondly, consider them as dwellers in the church, and members by permission: and so we may liue with them in it: for we may not make a separation from the church, because wicked men are permitted therein. Christ liued among the Iewes, though their teachers and rulers were both hereticks and hypocrits: and yet wee must remember, that living among them, and beholding their wicked conuersation, wee must not approoue of their vngodlinesse, but bee grieved for the same, as righteous *Lot* was for the abominations of Sodome, *2. Pet. 2. 7.* Further, if it fall out by the negligence of the gouernours, that euill men be admitted to the Sacraments, wee must not for their company refuse to communicate: for our Saviour Christ liuing among the Iewes, communicated with them in their Sacraments & seruice of the Temple, though many of them were notorious both for wicked life and false doctrine. The reason is, for that another mans euill conscience doth not defile our good conscience: but wee may keepe a good conscience in that action wherein the wicked is defiled. Now though we may thus conuerse with euill men, yet these two caueats must be obserued, I. To haue no priuat company with knowne and open euill persons. This *Paul* expressly forbiddeth, saying: *I haue written vnto you, that you company not together:* that is, in priuate and familiar manner. II. Wee must not shew special familiaritie to euill persons. God will not take the wicked by the hand, *Iob 8. 20.* and we should be followers of God. Therefore *St Iohn* saith: *If any man come vnto you, and bring not this doctrine, receiue him not into house, neither bid him God speed.* *2. Ioh. 10.* Which must be vnderstood of speciall familiaritie: for thereby we doe not onely performe out-

(4) Rom. 12.

18.

1. Cor. 5. 14.
11.

ward dutie to the person, but also giue countenance to their sinnes: which in any case we must not do. And thus we see how to conuerse with euill men.

The Vse.

Hereby all those are iustly blamed which fit themselves for the humors and dispositions of all companies. This ought not to be. If any be knowne to be openly wicked, either for life or opinions, we must not keepe priuate company with them, or afford them our speciall familiaritie; but by withdrawing our selues from them, ease vs of such burdens.

Our Saviour Christ hauing commended this church for her seueritie against the wicked, in that shee could not endure them, doth proue the same to bee true by two arguments. The first wherof is contained in these words: *And hast examined them, &c.* to the end of the third verse. The second, in the 6. verse. For the first: it is taken from the sharp and round dealing of this church against euill men; and it hath two parts: First, her discoverie of false Apostles, *And hast examined them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.* Secondly, her opposing her selfe against them, beeing discovered, in the third verse: *Thou hast suffered and hast patience, &c.*

In their discoverie of these false Apostles note two special points: first, that God hath giuen to particular churches the spirit of wisdom, that is, the spirit of discerning: This appeareth by sundry testimonies of Scripture, 1. Cor. 2. 15. *The spirituall man, that is, he which is endued with Gods holy spirit, discerneth all things.*

(a) 1. Cor. 12. 29.

And Paul (a) assumeth, That the faithfull Corinthians did discern the Lords body: that is, see and put a great difference betweene the bread & wine in that Sacrament, and other common bread & wine: which none that want the spirit of God can do. Again, he biddeth them (b) *proue themselves whether they be in the faith or not:* to giue vs to vnderstand, that they had a gift of discerning, wherby they did know their owne estate, whether they were vnder the curse, or vnder grace.

(b) 2. Cor. 13. 5

And S. Iohn biddeth the Church to (c) *try the spirits:* that is, those doctrines which men pretending the gifts of the spirit, did teach. And in this place this church discovering of false Apostles, declareth plainly, that she hath a gift to discern

(c) 1. Ioh. 4. 1

who be sent of God to teach his church, and who not. And hence the godly learned in the church are said to *haue their senses exercised to discern both good & euil*, Heb. 5. 14. And in this regard, the churches of God differ from all other companies of men. For vnlesse men bee of Gods church, they want this gift of discerning spiritual things that differ, as true Apostles and false, good and bad, truth and falshood, &c.

The Vse.

Hence we may gather, that the church of God hath a gift to discern which is a true church, and which is not: for the church can discern whether a man bee a true Apostle, or not: and by the same gift it may discern the state of any particular church. Whence also it followeth, that wee may easily see whether the church of England be a true church, or not: It pleaseth some to call it into question, as it now standeth; and they auouch, That it is no church of God, that there are no true Ministers, no true preaching, or right administration of the Sacraments in it; and that these things with vs are illusions of Sathan, and our church his synagogue. But that ours is a true church of God is thus proued: The churches of Germany, Fraunce, Scotland, and Italy, that haue receiued the gospel, are the churches of God: and they haue the gift of discerning which is a true church of God, and which is not. Now they giue the right hands of fellowship vnto vs, and reuerence our church as the church of God. To whose testimonie we must rather cleaue, than to the opinion of a few priuate men, and so resolute our selues, that we are the true church of God.

Secondly, hence wee may gather, that the church of God hath a gift to discern scripture from that which is no scripture. The papists say the church indeed hath this gift: but it is by counsel and commission from the church of Rome; which is a meere forgery. For the church of Ephesus, which could discern of false Apostles, could no doubt by the same gift discern of the books of God, & that without counsell from the church of Rome; for at this time when Iohn writ, it was a more famous church than the church of Rome, and therefore went not thither for counsell.

II. point.

II point. In what things this discerning of false Apostles doth consist. It is a iudicial action of the church, consisting in two things here noted: First, in examination of false doctrine and false teachers: secondly, in condemnation afterward. The examination of them is set downe in these words: *And hast examined them that say they are Apostles, and are not.* Their condemning or sentence giving, in the words following, *And hast found them liers.*

For the first: examination is a gift of God to his church, and was here vsed for the triall of false Apostles. *Quest.* How may any church trie a false teacher? *Answer.* This is a point of large discourse: but the heads of true examination are these.

First, that church or that man that would rightly examine a false teacher, must prepare himselfe thereunto after this manner: he must looke that he haue a meeke spirit and an humble heart; for God reuealeth his will, not to the proud, but to the meeke and lowly: and as *Isay* sayth, to them that are of a contrite spirit, *Isay* 57.15. And in this humbling of himselfe, a man must renounce his owne naturall wit and reason, & become nothing in himselfe but even a foole, in respect of his own conceit. Also he must vnfeignedly pray to God, that hee would reueale vnto him his truth. *Aske* (saith Christ) *it shall be giuen you, euen (a) the holy Ghost, vnto them that desire of the father.* And *S. James* saith: *(b) If any man lacke wisdom, let him aske of God, which giueth to all men liberally.*

Secondly, after preparation hee must labour to know thoroughly what the false teachers are, and what be their opinions, with the grounds and foundations thereof; wherein they agree, and wherein they differ from the truth of God, maintained by the church: for it is a foule ouersight to misconceiue the state of the aduersaries question, by propounding it otherwise than they hold, as it falleth out with many in the handling of controversies.

Thirdly, due prooffe must bee made, whether the aduersaries doctrine bee of men or of God. This is Gods commandement, *1. Ioh. 4.1. Prooue the spirits, whether they be of God, or not.* And for triall

hercof, wee must haue recourse vnto the word of God; it must bee Iudge in this cause, *Isa. 8. ver. 20. To the law and to the testimonies, if they speake not according to this word, it is because there is no light in the.* *Ioh. 5. 39. Search the Scriptures for in them you looke to haue eternall life, and they are they which testifie of mee.* Who so fit to iudge in the matters of God, as God himselfe? and so hee doth in his written word, of all doctrine and opinions in religion. The Scriptures shew whether the doctrine examined bee directly gathered thence, and by iust consequent, or not.

Fourthly, serious consideration must be had of the faith and liues of the teachers examined: for a false teacher by Gods iust iudgement is vsually a wicked liuer. And therefore Christ saith: *(a) yee shall know them by their fruits:* if they bee thoroughly examined, such they will appeare, howsoeuer for a time they may bleare the eyes of men: as the hytories of the church in many famous heretickes do plainly declare.

The second braunch of this discouerie, is sentence giuing, in these words: *And hast found them liers.* The church here giueth out a sharpe and seuer sentence against them, she calleth them false Apostles, and liers; and yet she sinneth not, for Christ commendeth her for it. Though to raile or taunt cannot besee me any, yet magistrats and ministers in their places may giue out seuer speeches against offenders in token of detestation to their sinnes, and not offend. Thus *Iohn* called the Scribes and Pharisees a *generation of vipers*, *Mat. 3. 7.* and our Sauour Christ called *Herod a foxe*, *Luke 13. 32.* and *Paul* called the *Galathians fooles*, *Gal. 3. 1.* And in this place the church calleth these false teachers liers, which is verie much: for therein shee accuseth them of three things: First, of teaching that which was false indeed: Secondly, that they know it to bee false, and so sinned of knowledge: Thirdly, that they did it of malice, with intent to blind the eyes of the Church, and to deceiue the people.

In this discouerie, wee may obserue the iust accomplishment of *Pauls* propheticie, *Act. 20. 29. 30.* namely, that there should rise vp among the Ephesians grievous wolues, and men speaking per-

uerse things : and such were these false Apostles, who after examination were found lyers.

Againe, seeing in the dayes of this Apostle *Iohn*, men durst presume to claime Apostolicke authoritie, and call themselves Apostles when they were not : no maruell if the Pope of Rome six hundred yeres after did challenge to himselfe to be *Peters* successour, and to haue Apostolicke authoritie : and that they dare now auouch some bookes to bee Scripture which are not as also bring in their traditions & vnwritten verities to bee receiued and obeyed equally with Gods word.

Verse 3. *Thou hast suffered, and hast patience, and for my names sake hast laboured.*

Here our Sauour Christ declareth how this Minister and church of Ephesus opposed themselves against false teachers after their discouerie. The manner we shall see in handling the points particularly as they lie in order. *Thou hast suffered*, or, Thou hast borne a burden : for the word signifieth *to be pressed downe vnder a great burden*. This burden was the troubles which false Apostles brought vpon them after they were discouered, partly by open affliction and persecution, partly by the spreading of their heretical & schismatical doctrine. These false teachers were *Ebion*, *Cerintus*, *Marcion*, and such like, who in the dayes of *Iohn* troubled this church, as histories do shew.

Here we may obserue, that it is Gods will, that the best churches should bee troubled by wicked men and hereticall teachers, who both by false doctrine, and persecution, become grievous burdens. This the Lord permits for weighty causes, I. That true beleeuers may be excited more constantly to embrace the sincere doctrine of the Gospell : and therefore *Iude* (a) most worthily exhorts the Christians in his time *to fight for the common faith*. II. That professors may bee tried whether they foundly hold the doctrine of the Gospell, or not, *1. Cor. 11. 19. It is meet (saith Paul) that there should be heresies in the Church, that they which are sound in the faith, and approved, may be knowne*. III. That God may execute his iudgements

vpon wicked men and hypocrites that haue not loved his truth & revealed vnto them, *2. Thess. 2. 10, 11. God gave them up to strange illusions to beleene lyes, because they haue not loved his truth*. For many know the word, that loue it not.

This must teach vs to take heed of a common scandall in the world, which is, to be offended at religion, because there be in the church schismes and heresies : which come not from the Gospell, but from the malice of Satan, who soweth his tares among the Lords wheat. Wee must consider, that it is the will of God there should be such evils in his church ; and therefore should labour to bee so farre from offence, that hereby wee bee rather prouoked with more cheerefulness and courage to loue and embrace religion.

And hast patience, and for my name hast suffered &c. Here is set downe the dealing of this Church against these false Apostles in all their persecutions. But first note the coherence of this vertue with the former : *Thou hast suffered trouble, and hast had patience*. *Quest.* How can these stand together ? It is against mans nature in trouble to be patient : for troubles & afflictions make men discontent, and to fret against God and man. *answ.* They stand not by nature, but by grace, *Rom. 5. vers. 4. Tribulation bringeth forth patience* : namely, to all those that haue receiued to beleue in Christ, for to them God giueth the spirit of meekenesse in their troubles, shedding his loue into their hearts, whereby they are enabled to suffer any thing for his name, euen with ioy.

And hast patience. This is the first means whereby this church opposed her selfe against the false Apostles : they troubled her two wayes ; by persecution, and by false doctrine. Now by patience this church opposeth her selfe against their persecutions. And indeed that is the most excellent meanes for any man or any church to oppose themselves against their enemies, and to vanquish them : for hereby they shall stop their mouths, and if it bee possible win them to their faith and religion.

In this their practise wee haue an example for our direction, how to oppose our selues against wicked men, with whom

(a) *Iud. 1.*

Thy vs

Thy vs

whom we liue; or any enemie that shall trouble vs, either by oppression, or hereticall doctrines: Wee must not render taunt for taunt, and abuse for abuse; but labour for patience, not in bearing with their sinnes (that may not bee) but in a meeke enduring of their iniuries and wrongs whereby they trouble vs. Thus shall we stop their mouths, and soonest overcome them.

And for my names sake haſt laboured. Here Christ ſetteth downe the ſecond meanes whereby this church oppoſeth her ſelf againſt the ſpreading of falſe doctrine by theſe falſe Apoſtles, which was the ſecond way whereby they became a burden vnto her. The meaning of the words iſt this, that they had taken much paines to maintaine the glory of God, & the true doctrine of Chriſt Ieſus, labouring therein as much as the falſe Apoſtles did to broach their damnable heresies.

Here wee are taught a ſecond dutie, how we are to oppoſe our ſelues againſt all hereticall and ſchiſmaticall teachers: namely, as they labour to publiſh their falſe doctrine; ſo muſt wee endeavour to maintaine the glory of God and his true religion. Hereunto a twofold labour is required: partly of the miniſter, & partly of the people. The labour of the miniſter ſtands in theſe things principally, I. He muſt endeavour by reading and ſtudie to furniſh himſelfe with the true knowledge of the foundation and ſubſtance of the Goſpell and true religion, that he may bee able ſoundly and plainly to teach the ſame. For this cauſe *S. Iohn* is commanded *to eat the little booke, Reuel. 10. 9. 10.* which was as it were by ſtudy and meditation to haue the ſame digeſted and ſetled in his heart, Hence *Malachie* ſaith (a) *The prieſts lips ſhould preſerue wiſedome, and thither ſhould the people come for inſtruction.* And euery ſcribe taught of God muſt haue ſtore in the treaſurie of his heart, like a good houſholder, *Math. 13. 52.*

Secondly, he muſt deliuer the whole will and counſell of God, concerning ſaluation, truly and diſtinctly vnto his people, as it iſt propounded in the bookes of the Prophets and Apoſtles. This *Paul* commendeth by his owne example, *Act. 20. 27.* telling vnto this church that he had taught them al the will of God, and kept back nothing which he was commanded to deliuer

unto them. III. He muſt labour to diſcern and be able to diſcouer falſe teachers vnto the people; that hee may not onely know them himſelfe, but alſo cauſe the church to take notice of them: *Ti. 1. 9.* *Paul* requireth that the teacher in the church, *Be able to conuince the gainſayers to his truth.* In this diſcouerie hee muſt doe two things. Firſt, detect the hereticall doctrines. Secondly, their wicked manners. Thus dealt our Saviour Chriſt in his own perſon liuing in the church of the Iewes, with the Scribes and Pharisees: hee did detect vnto the people their falſe interpretations of the law, *Math. 5. 21.* to the end. And alſo their wicked liues & damnable hypocriſie, *Mat. 23. 3. 4. &c.* to the end. And Saint *Paul* in all his Epiſtles, laboureth to diſcouer the wicked liues, and to confute the hereticall opinions of the falſe Apoſtles. I V. Hee muſt endeavour that the doctrine of the Goſpell thus publiſhed, may edifie. This is the end of all teaching, as *Paul* ſheweth, *1. Cor. 14.* throughout the whole chapter. Now it doth edifie, when it is ſo applied to the hearers, that thereby they are worne to Chriſt, ſuffering themſelues to bee reformed by it in heart and life, & ſo made fit for the kingdome of God. V. Hee muſt be carefull in his own perſon to become a patterne of the doctrine of the Goſpell which he teacheth, that ſo the people may haue a double light to follow. This is a notable meanes in the miniſter to make men to loue the Goſpell, and the neglect thereof cauſeth many to contemne and deſpiſe the ſame. VI. Laſtly, hee muſt bee diligent in praying for his owne and other particular churches of God, that they may know, beleue, and obey the ſame doctrine which is taught them out of Gods word. Thus did *Paul* as wee may ſee in his particular Epiſtles pray for euery church: that by the bleſſing of the ſpirit, they might embrace & obey the Goſpell of Chriſt, *Phil. 1. 4. 9. 10. Col. 1. 9. 10. 11.*

The people alſo for the name of Chriſt and his religion, muſt vndergoe a threefold labour. I. Euery one muſt ſee that himſelfe know and beleue the true and ſincere doctrine of the Goſpell. This Chriſt inioyneth to all, in this commandement, *Repent and beleue*, which none can doe ynelleſſe they firſt know and vnderſtand

(a) Mal. 2. 7.

derstand the doctrine thereof: and therefore every one must do as *Marie* did, for which Christ so commends her: namely, lay aside matters of lesser moment, & giue our selues to heare and learne the doctrine of Christ, Luke 10. 39. 42. II. Every one must vse all good means that knowledge of religion which himselfe hath receiued, bee conueyed to others. And indeed if we truly beleue, wee cannot containe our selues, but must needs teach others. For as Christ saith, *Hee (a)* *that drinketh of the water of life, out of his belly shall flow riuers of water of life, streaming out for the good of others.* *Quest.* How should priuat men conuey their knowledge vnto others? *Ans.* I. All mai- sters & gouernors of families are bound in conscience to teach those that are vnder them the maine points and grounds of true religion: his place requireth gifts and God looks for increase. For euerie christian family should be a little church, as it is said of the house of *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, 1. Cor. 16. 19. II. Every man in his place must labour to conuey that knowledge he hath vnto his neighbour, yea to his enemies. *The Iewes (b)* *would compass sea and land to make a man a professe:* And Idolaters at this day will trauell farre and neere to make a man of their profession. Much more therefore must all true christians labour to conuey their knowledge to others, so to winne them vnto Christ. III. Every man is to edifie those that bee members of the same church, in these three things: faith, hope, & loue, as *Iude* notably exhorteth in the end of his Epistle, *Edifie one another in your most holy faith,* ver. 20. *Have compassion of some in putting difference: & others same with feare in pulling them out of the fire,* ver. 22. 23. IV. Every priuat man must professe and defend the true religion of Christ against all the enemies thereof. 1. Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready alwayes to giue an answer to euery man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.* And this confession must be, not onely in word, but in deed. For by a blamelesse and holy conuersation euery christian holdeth forth the word of life, Phil. 2. 15. 16.

The Psj.

Seeing the maintenance of true religion is so excellent a worke: wee must bee admonished euery one in our place, to take paines in all the duties that belong

vnto vs: that by vs Christs religion may be furthered. For Gods church is not called the pillar of truth, onely because the minister thereof maintaineth Gods truth: but also because euery member of the church is as a pillar in his place to maintaine and professe the true doctrine of Christ for his glorie. Besides, this is a duty of the first table, and therefore we must haue more speciall care for the performance thereof. And thus wee see the two means wherby the church of *Ephesus* opposed her selfe against false teachers.

And hast not fainted. Here Christ setteth downe in what manner this church laboured to maintaine his true religion, and thereby his honor and glory: namely, by constancie and perseuerance in labour. This is an excellent vertue, and a notable example for vs to follow: for we through Gods goodnesse haue the true religion of Christ among vs, and for many yeares sundry among vs haue maintained the same against all enemies, though not without some trouble and danger. Now this which hath beene done is nothing, vnlesse wee hold on our good course constantly, and labour vnto death in the maintenance thereof. This exhortation is the more necessarie, because we know not how long we shal inioy the gospel with peace; for vsually after long peace God trieth his by persecution: neither know we by what means of triall God will exercise vs. Therefore as we now professe the Gospell, so let vs continue constant therein, and not turne with time or state: for then we loose our commendation at Christs hands. And thus much of the commendation of this church for her vertues.

Vers. 4. *Nevertheless I haue somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first loue.*

These words containe the second part of the proposition of this Epistle, to wit, a sharpe and seuerer reproofe of this church for decay in grace; as will appeare in the opening of the words. *Nevertheless I haue somewhat against thee,* Here Christ speaketh as a Iudge vnto this church, and to the minister thereof, and layeth this action vnto their charge: that they

they had left their first loue, that is, that loue which they bare to God, and his religion, and to their brethren, at that time when they were first called vnto the profession of the Gospel. This loue they are said to *haue left*, not as though they had quite lost it, but onely because they suffered it to decay, and to waxe cold in good works. But some will say, they are before commended for their zeale and labour for Gods glory; and for their seueritie against false teachers: how then had they left their first loue? *Ans.* At this time when Christ doth thus reprove them, their loue was commendable; but yet it was nothing in regard of that which they had at their first conuer-
 sion.

The 7th.

If Christ haue something against this church for leaving her first loue; then no doubt hee hath something against the church of England, and against vs at this day; howsoever wee may perswade our selues that we be high in his fauour, yet we are in the like, or a worse estate than this church now was: for a great part of the bodie of our church hath left off their first loue: and the greatest part hath no loue at al. That many haue left their first loue is too too euident. For such as in Queen *Maries* time were content to suffer much for the gospel, as the histories of our church doe shew, after they inioyed a little quietnesse became meere worldlings, as their liues haue testified afterward. And in such congregations where the word hath long bin preached, this is too apparant that men who for the space of twentie, often, or seuen yeares, haue shewed feruent loue to Christ and his Gospel, and to their brethren, doe now fall away, and shew none at all. He that hath but halfe an eye, may see many for a yeare or two very forward and zealous in religion, who soone after suffer pleasures, profits, or preferments, to draw them quite away: some I confesse through the mercy of God are free from this decay. But there is yet a more grievous fault among vs: for the greatest part of our people haue no loue at all. These are the dayes whereof Christ said
 (a) *loue should waxe cold.* And whereof *Paul* said, Men should be (b) *louers of themselves*: for take the most congregations where the Gospel hath bene long pre-

ched, yet you shall find that the hearers are neither bettered for knowledge, nor for obedience, but remaine still as ignorant and prophane as euer they were. This argueth that they haue no loue of God in their hearts, though they haue a formall profession of his name in their mouth: For where the loue of God is, there must needs bee increase in knowledge, in grace, and in obedience. Again, see how men generally walk in their callings, and therein behold a meere defect of loue. All the paines they take is for their priuat gaine & pleasure; no regard is had of Gods glory, of the maintenance of true religion, and of the good of their brethren: herein their owne consciences shall be the witnesses. So that generally this may be said, We haue no loue at all. What an action then shall we think hath Christ against vs? It must needs be grieuous; and so our case fearefull and dangerous. If an earthly prince and potentate had an action against vs, and his case were good, it would make vs looke about vs, yea to tremble and quake, and to bee at our wits end. Behold, not a worldly prince, but the king of heaven and earth hath a matter against vs, just & grieuous: oh how should this mooue vs to search our selues, to trie our estate, and to humble our selues vpon the knees of our hearts before his maiestie. Wee may not imagine that this charge of Christ doth not concerne vs: the conclusion of this Epistle shewes it belongs to all that haue eares to heare. And therefore wee should labour to prevent Gods iudgement, by iudging our selues for our decay and want of loue.

Againe, this rebuke of Christ for decay of loue, should teach vs to labour for increase in loue to God and to our brethren; adding grace to grace in our harts, as we adde day vnto day in our liues, that so our loue may abound: read 1. Thes. 4. 1. 9. 10. where *Paul* vrgeth this duetie at large: he confesseth they did loue one another, and yet beseecheth them to increase therein. Phil. 3. 13. 4. in *Pauls* person we haue a worthy president, which we must follow, if wee thinke to come whither hee is gone before: though hee had gone far in the loue of God, yet he laboured to perfection: and therefore considered not that which was past, as resting

(a) Math. 24.
 12. 22.
 (b) 2. Ti 3. 2

sting in it, but rather how farre hee was too short, that so he might vse meanes to increase in loue, and in all other good graces, till hee come to perfection. A christian mans life is a way that leadeth to heauen, wherein we once setting foot, must euer go forward, and not stand still or turne backe, lest we neuer come there. The state of a christian is like vnto a child, which still groweth till it come to a perfect strength: and so must every child of God labour to grow in the graces of God, till they bee perfect men in Christ: For if they stand still, Christ hath something against them.

The Rhemists in their annotations abuse this place, to proue that a man may quite fall away from grace. Therefore to cleare this text, and to confirme our hearts in the truth of Gods word, this question must be scanned *Whether a man may quite fall away from grace?* Ans. Grace in Scripture is taken two waies: first, for that fauour of God whereby hee accepteth of some for his children in Christ. This is the first grace and the fountaine of al other: and taking grace in this sense, I say, that the signs of grace and the sense thereof in the heart, may be lost: But the fauour of God it selfe cannot bee lost of them that truly beleue. When an earthly father is displeased with his child for some notorious crime, hee will turne the signes of his fauour into signes of displeasure, and shew the same partly by words, and partly by stripes: and yet he still continueth his father, and holdeth him for his sonne, without any purpose to disinherit him: Euen so God dealeth with his children; for their sins and corruptions, hee will turne away his louing countenance from them, and change the signes of his fauour into anger and displeasure; when as yet the good purpose of their adoption is not altered, but remaineth firme for euer: and God is still their father, though an angrie father through the prouocation of their sinnes. Secondly, grace in Scripture is taken for the gifts of grace which are bestowed on them that beleue in Christ. These gifts of grace bee of two sorts, some more principall, of absolute necessity vnto saluation, without which none can bee saued; as faith, and also hope, and loue, which proceed from faith. There be others also lesse princi-

pall, which be very profitable and requisite, yet not absolutely needful vnto saluation; As the feeling of Gods fauour, alacritie in prayer, & sense of ioy and comfort in the holy Ghost. These lesse principall graces may quite be lost. The principall graces also may be decayed, lessened, and couered, in regard of operation, euen in Gods children: but quite extinguished they cannot be, for God vpholdeth them by perseverance: where faith, hope, & loue are once truly wrought by Gods spirit, they are neuer wholly or finally taken away, but onely in part, and in sense and feeling for a time. This answer is agreeable to this text, for the church of Ephesus is here blamed, not for quite loosing her loue, but because shee had lett her first loue, suffering it to decay and waxe lesse than it was at their first conuersion.

And because this doctrine is oppugned earnestly, not onely by the church of Rome, but also by some churches and sects of the Protestants: I will first shew the truth hereof out of Gods word and then scan the cheefe reasons that are brought against it. *That grace cannot be wholly and finally lost*, these reasons proue: I. *Mat. 16.18.* The promise is made to Peter, and in him to all the faithfull: *That vpon that faith which hee professed, Christ would build his temple, & the gates of hell should not preuaile against it.* Which last words must be marked, for they intimate that the diuell with his adherents would shew much force & violence against the faith of the elect, but yet they should neuer get the victory, or ouercome it wholly. II. *Mat. 24.24.* Christ foretelling that false Prophets should come, sayth: *They should seduce, if it were possible, the very elect.* Where he taketh this for graunted, that the elect, albeit they may bee assaulted grievously, yet they can neuer be wholly or finally drawne away from their faith. III. *Ioh. 10.27.28.* *My sheepe heare my voice (saith Christ) and I know them, and they follow me: and I giue vnto them eternal life, & they shall neuer perish.* To this they answer: It is true, they shall neuer perish, so long as they remaine the sheep of Christ. But that cauill is cut off in the next wordes: *Neither shall any plucke them out of my hands, my father which gaue them me, is greater than all, and none is able to plucke them out of my fathers*

N.B.

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(10) Rom. 5. 5

N.B.

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father's hand: And therefore neither the deuill, nor the world, nor the flesh, can by any temptation draw the sheepe of Christ from their faith, and make them to be no sheepe. I V. Reason. Iohn 3. 36. *Hee that beleeueth in Christ hath eternall life.* They say he hath it in hope, and no otherwise. I answere; if they haue it in hope, they shall neuer perih: (a) *For hope maketh not ashamed.* V. Reason. Rom 8. 30. *Whom hee predestinat, them also hee called: and whom hee called them also hee iustified: and whom hee iustified them also hee glorified.* Those which are elected, called, and iustified by faith, must needs be glorified, & therefore cannot fall away finally: for such shal neuer be glorified. And in the end of the chapter vers 38, he addeth, *That neither death, nor life, Angels, principalities, nor powers, nor any thing els can separate vs,* viz. the faithfull, *from the love of God, which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.* But if the faithfull might fall away finally, then they might bee seuered from the loue of God. VI. Reason. Rom. 11. 29. *The gifts of Gods calling (that is, the peculiar gifts that pertaine to saluation) are without repentance.* They say it is true, God indeed neuer repenteth him of his gifts: but yet a man may perih & fall away, because he may refuse & reiect Gods grace giuen vnto him. This answer is frivolous, maintaining this absurditie, that the powerfull wil of God should be brought vnder the silly will of the creature: if man could repell Gods grace giuen vnto him, then should mans will take place, and Gods will bee made frustrate and void. VII Reason. 1. Ioh. 3. 9 *Whoso neuer is borne of God sinneth not, because his seed remaineth in him: neither can he sinne, because he is borne of God.* How is that true, for chap. 2. 10. *Hee that saith hee hath not sinne: maketh God a lyer, and his word is not in him?* Answ. The place must be vnderstood thus: *He that is borne of God sinneth not,* that is, with full consent, and with all his heart. Sin doth not raigne in him: for the regenerat man consisteth of two parts; flesh and spirit: he sinneth not as he is spirit, that is, regenerate; but as he is flesh and sinfull. His will sinneth not as it is spirituall, but as it is carnall. The Papists say, Indeed hee sinneth not, so long as hee continueth to be borne of God. This shift is cut off by the word of the text, *Neither can he sinne,* because the seed

of grace, euen the word of God abideth in him. This place plainly proueth, euen in the iudgement of the Papists, that the child of God cannot wholly or finally fall from grace. They say it is a hard place, and indeed they cannot answere to it. VIII. Reason. If a man may finally fall from grace, then may he bee wholly cut off from Christ: for grace is neuer wholly lost, till a man bee quite cut off from Christ. But it cannot bee, that a member of Christ can bee quite cut off: for then it should follow, that one and the same man must bee often ioyned to Christ; namely, so often as hee falleth by sinne, if he would bee saued. Whereupon this would also follow, that one and the same man must bee often baptized: for Baptisme is the Sacrament of initiation, the meanes of admission into the Church, and the seale of our vnion with Christ. But Rebaptization may not bee admitted. The church of God denieth it vpon this ground, because a man is onely once borne of God. IX. Reason. Christ teacheth vs to pray thus, *Lead vs not into temptation:* that is, suffer not Satan and sin wholly to preuaile against vs, and finally to vanquish vs. This petition being taught by Christ, must needs be lawfull, and according to Gods will: and therefore hereunto, as to every lawfull petition, belong these two things: First, Gods commaund to make it: Secondly, his promise to assure vs it shall bee graunted. Whereby this is euident: That there is in Gods word a promise, assuring euery child of God that he shal neuer wholly be conquered of the diuel: and therefore he can neuer wholly or finally fall from grace; for if hee might, then were he wholly ouercome in temptation.

The contrarie arguments be of three sorts; places of Scripture, Examples, and Reasons: for the first, Exod. 32. 32. When the Israelites had sinned that great sinne of Idolatrie. Moses prayeth God to forgive them; *If not (saith he) blot mee out of thy booke.* Hence they gather, that a child of God may bee blotted out of Gods booke of life, and so finally perih. Answ. That place must be vnderstood with this condition: *If it be possible;* as in the like prayer it is exprest by Christ: *Father if it be possible, let this cup passe from me.* This

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condition must needs be added : for els we must say, that *Moses* prayed for that which he knew was impossible; namely, that one priuate man should suffer eternall punishment for the sinnes of others, though in temporall punishments such a thing may be, yet in eternall, it is impossible. Againe, *Moses* in this prayer doth principally shew his exceeding affection and zeale for Gods glorie, and for the safetie of his brethren, both which hee preferred before his owne life; as if hee should say: Lord pardon them, and rather than thy name should loose glorie, blot me out of thy booke. The like affection was in *Paul*, when hee said, (a) *Hee could wish himselfe to be seperate from Christ for the loue of his brethren the Iewes.* They further vrge the Lords answere to *Moses*, verl. 3. *Whosoener hath sinned against me, I will put his name out of my booke.* But as the Lord therein answereth to *Moses* prayer, so must it be vnderstood, with the like exception.

II. Obiect. Ezek. 18, 24. *If the righteous man turne away from his righteousness, and commit iniquitie, and do according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall hee liue? All his righteousness that hee hath done shall not be mentioned: but hee shall die in his sin.* Here (say they) it is plaine, that a man may fall from grace? *Ans.* Righteousnesse is twofold: of the outward action, and of the person. So *Paul* distinguisheth, when hee desireth to be found (b) *not in his owne righteousness, which is of the law; that is, such as was in him while hee was a Pharisee: but in the righteousness of Christ.* The righteousness of the action is, when a man for outward actions keeps the law of God. The righteousness of the person is that, whereby a man is accepted righteous before God. And answerable herunto, there be two kinds of righteous men; one that is outwardly righteous before men, though not indeed: The other, that is truly righteous before God. Now of the former of these two, must that place be vnderstood: for the Lord there pleadeth with such as did esteeme and auow themselves to be righteous, saying: *Their fathers had eaten foure grapes; that is, had sinned, and they were punished for their fathers offences, though they were righteous: And the holy Ghost speaking according to their*

own conceit and opinion of themselves, calleth them righteous: and of such it is true they may turne from their righteousness.

III. Obiect. Luk. 8. 13. *Some beleeue for a time, & in time of temptation go away.* *Ans.* There be three kinds of faith: Historicall, Temporarie, and sauing faith. In Historicall faith, is knowledge of the word of God, with assent vnto it. In temporarie faith, are three things: knowledge of the Word, Assent, and Approbation also, with some ioy. In sauing faith, there are foure things: Knowledge, Assent, Approbation, and Apprehension: that is, in applying of the promises of God vnto a mans self; whence proceedeth ioy. And answerably, there are three kinds of beleeuers. I. such as know the word of God, but yet haue no loue therof. II. such as know it, assent vnto it, and reioyce in it also, for a time. The third are such as apprehend the promises, and apply them to themselves. Now the two first kinds of faith may bee lost: and the two first kinds of beleeuers may fall away, whereof Saint Luke speaketh: But hence it followeth not, that sauing faith may bee lost; for he that is endued therewith can neuer fall away. But faith (say they) is only one, *Ephes. 4. 5. There is but one faith, one God, one hope, and one Baptisme.* *Answer.* By one faith is there meant one religion, and doctrine of saluation: as elsewhere is vsuall, by the name of Faith, 1. Timothy. 1. 19.

Their second kind of arguments are *Examples*: which are chiefly two: one of *Adam*, the other of *Dauid*. For *Adam*; they say he was created righteous, & yet he fell wholly from grace: and therefore any beleeuer now, may much more fall away, who haue farre lesse grace than he had. *Ans.* This Argument is not good: for though *Adam* had a greater measure of grace than we now haue, yet our grace hath a greater priuiledge than his had: his grace came by creation; ours is by redemption & regeneration. *Adam* had the first grace, to bee able to obey; but he wanted the second, to bee sure to persevere: because God would permit his fall, to make a way both to manifest his iustice and mercie in our redemption by Christ. But the child of God after his conversion, wherein hee hath the first grace

(a) Rom. 9. 3.

(b) Phil. 3. 9.

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grace to repent and beleue, hath also an infallible promise, That hee shall receiue the second grace, to abide in that faith. (a) Phil. 1. 6. And therefore Paul saith: (a) *I am persua- d. d. , that hee which hath begun this good works in you, will performe it vntill the day of the Lord Iesus Christ.* And againe (b) *The Lord is faithfull, who wil stablish you, and keep you from euill.*

Secondly, *David* (say they) by his two grievous sinnes fell wholly from grace?

Ans. He fell indeed grievously, but not wholly: for after his fall hee contemned not Gods word, he hated not God, nor despaiied of mercie; which he must haue done, if he had fallen wholly. And therefore hee had remorse for his sinne, so soone as the Prophet *Nathan* came vnto him. But (say they) hee prayeth God to create a new heart in him, therefore he had then no grace: For creation is a making of that which hath no being. *Ans.*

David then speaketh not as hee was before God, but as he was in his own sence and feeling: for by his sinnes Gods graces were sore decayed. But (say they) he repented not for the space of one whole yere: Now where there is no repentance, there is no faith, and consequently no grace nor pardon. *Ans.* In repentance there be two things: the gift of repentance, and the act and practise thereof. The gift of repentance was in the heart of *David*, when hee yet lay in his sinnes: but the act thereof lay hid, and hee wanted the renewing thereof all that time. Againe, *David* had the pardon of his sinne past, though hee had not the pardon of those two sinnes, till hee repented of them. Neither was his repentance lost but decayed onely, hee wanted not the power of it simply, but the practise of it onely in that act.

Their third kind of arguments are drawne from equitie and reason.

I. Hee that is a member of an harlot, and of the deuill, ceaseth wholly to bee a member of Christ: but a child of God truly beleeuing, may become the member of an harlot, and of Sathan, as *David* did. *Ans.* There be three kinds of members; dead, decayed, and liuing members: a dead member is that which is onely in shew a member: as a legge of wood or of brasse in a mans bodie. A decayed member is a true member, though weak,

as is a legge or arme that is taken with a pallsie, or sore wounded. But a liuely member is that which doth moue, & do al it functions perfectly. So in the church there be some members dead, and onely in shew; others feeble and weake, that by reason of some grievous sinnes are not able to doe their duties. And there be liuely members, which serue God with an vpright and perfect heart. Now, though a member of an harlot cannot be a liuely member of Christ, because by his sinnes hee weakeneth and woundeth the graces of God (for euery adulterer and fornicator doth as much as in him lieth cut himselfe off from Christ) yet hee may bee a decayed member of Christ. And this may the rather stand, because a man is made the member of Christ one way, namely, spiritually; and the member of an harlot another way, namely, bodily.

II. *Reason.* If a man cannot fall from grace, then preaching, praier, the Sacraments, and all means of perseuerance are needlesse? *Ans.* Nothing lesse: for they haue all their good and necessarie vse vnto them which haue grace; euen to make them constant in grace. For where the Scripture teacheth the certaintie of saluation, it implieth the vse of the meanes of perseuerance. *Paul* in his iourney to Rome was certaine they should come all safe to land (a) by the promise of God: yet when the mariners would haue gone out of the ship, *Hee telleth the Captaine vnto lesse* (b) *these stay in, wee cannot be saued*: because they were the means to bring them to land. So when *Isay* had told *Exchias* from the Lord that hee should liue fifteene yeares longer, he was thereby assured of recouerie, and yet hee vsed (c) *a bunch of figges* as a means thereof: as also food and rayment to preserue his life afterward.

III. *Reason.* This doctrine of certaine perseuerance maintaineth men in securitie? *Ans.* Securitie is twofold, carnall, and spirituall: carnall, when a man regardeth not at all the means of his saluation, but giueth himselfe wholly to the profits and pleasures of this world. Spirituall, when a man relieth on God for his saluation, by beleeuing his promises: and this securitie it maintaineth, but not the carnall securitie: For it teacheth the vse

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(a) Act. 27. 24

(b) Ysaie 31.

(c) Ila. 38. 31

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of the meanes of perseuerance, as prayer, hearing, and reading of the word, and receiving the Sacraments. And thus I conclude this question, That the true child of God, who truly beleueeth, when he sinneth, doth neither wholly nor finally fall away, neither can doe.

Lastly, if this were true of this famous Church of Ephesus, which was founded and preserued by the Apostles, that shee suffered her first loue to decay; then how can it be otherwise with vs, but that wee should suffer our first loue as well towards God as man, to lessen and diminish? and that this is so, our consciences will tell vs, if wee looke to that loue and zeale we had at our first calling: and though wee haue not felt this decay, yet we must know wee be in danger of it continually. And therefore we must take heed that we suffer not our good affections in religion to diminish. Water that hath bene once hot, will afterward be most cold, and freeze the hardest: euen so, when our hearts haue bene once heated with the fire of the Lords altar, as true loue, and other graces of the spirit, if we suffer them to decay, we shall become more frozen in iniquitie than any others. The hawke while she is quick to take her prey, is set vpon the hand of kings and nobles: but if she waxe weake and die, shee is cast off to the dunghill. Euen so we while we are hot and cheerefull in loue towards God and his church, we are carried as it were on Gods owne hand: but if wee faint and decay in loue, we shall be cast lower than if we had neuer bene so exalted. This loue of God in vs is like a little flame of fire, for the maintaining whereof we must doe three things: First, take heed of all manner of sinne, which quencheth loue and other graces of the spirit, as water quencheth fire. In the old testament the priests kept fire burning vpon the altar day & night, to bee alwayes ready to sacrifice vnto the Lord: and so must we keep the flame of loue and other graces continually burning in our hearts, that thence wee may offer vp acceptable sacrifices of praise & thanksgiuing vnto the Lord. Secondly, we must stir vp the gifts of grace that are in vs, as Paul saith to Timothy, 2. Tim. 1. 6. vsing a comparison from the fire, which burneth more bright and cleare when it

is stirred vp. Lastly, we must exercise our selues in the duties of pietie, as faith, repentance, loue, and such like: and so shal they not decay. And thus much for the sinne of this church.

Verf. 5. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, & repent and do thy first works: or els I will come against thee shortly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou amend.

Our Sauour Christ the faithfull physician of our soules, hauing sharply rebuked this church, doth here prescribe vnto them a foueraigne remedie against their sin of decay in loue. From whence we may learne, that the law whereby sin is reprobued is to be taught, but yet with this qualification, that withall the doctrine of the Gospell be ioyned thereunto, that the sinnes which are ripped vp by the law, may bee cured by the Gospell. This is Christs manner of preaching in this place, whose practise is a most worthy platforme for al his ministers: for we haue no warrant at this day to preach the law barely, which onely maketh the wound, without the gospell which alone sheweth the remedie.

This remedie here prescribed is of speciall vse, and worthy our consideration: generally, by it we haue direction to answer to two necessarie questions of practise, which often fall out in the life of man. First, a man is effectually called to professe the Gospell, and yet after his conuersion, either through the corruption of his nature, or by the temptation of the diuell and the world, falleth into sinne againe: what must this man doe for his recouerie? *Ans. Hee must remember whence he is fallen, & repent of those his sins and do his first works.* The second question is this: A man that hath all his life long lived in ignorance & sin, is now touched in conscience for his loose life; how shal this man escape the wrath of God, & become reconciled vnto him? *Ans. He must first remember whence hee is fallen by Adams sinne, and by his owne transgressions: Secondly, he must repent of his sinnes: Thirdly, endeavor to doe the first workes, whereto he is bound by the law of creation, & so shal he escape the wrath of God, & be receiued into his loue and fauour.*

In particular, this remedie hath three parts: The first, *Remember whence thou art fallen*: The second, *And repent*: The third, *And do thy first works*. The words following, *Or els I will come against thee*, are a reason of this remedie to persuade them to do the duties prescribed.

For the first, *Remember whence thou art fallen*: The words beare this sence: Examine thy selfe thoroughly, & see in thy selfe the decay of thy former loue: and then ponder the same in thy heart seriously and thoroughly. Here Christ inioyneth to this church two duties. I. *Examination*, whereby shee must descend into her owne heart, and search out her owne wants; especially the want of her loue to God, to his word, and to her brethren. II. *Consideration*, whereby she must often thinke of these her wants, and lay the same to her heart vnfaignedly.

This course which Christ taketh with this church, teacheth vs first, that it is a dangerous thing for any person in Gods church not to bee acquainted thoroughly with his owne estate, that so hee may search out his owne wants, and deeply consider of the same. For this very thing *Jeremie* blamed the people in his time, that no man said with himselfe, *(a) what haue I done*. And Christ layeth this sinne to the charge of the people of the old world, that they were ignorant of their estate, *(b) They knew nothing till the flood came and tooke them all away*. And this is the common sin of this age: no man almost doth examine himselfe & consider in his hart his own estate, by reason of his sins and wants. Nay, men are growne to this, that they count it a meane to breed melancholy, and therefore do fly the practise of this dutie, and so nuzzell themselves in their fearefull securitie.

Secondly, here wee learne that it is a speciall dutie for them that lue in Gods church, to be thoroughly acquainted with their owne estate: to examine and search out their owne sinnes: and often to consider seriously of their particular wants, *Zephania* preaching the doctrine of repentance vnto the people, beginneth thus: *Search ye, search your selves oh nation not worthy to be beloved*. Where the word translated (*search*) signifieth such a search as a man would make for some small thing in a great heape of chaffe. This is

the Lords counsell, *Hag. 1. 7*. Consider your owne wayes in your hearts: and it must be our practise if wee would bee saved. This dutie is the beginning and ground of true repentance, and therefore Christ here giueth it the first place; for no man can truly repent before hee bee acquainted with his owne infirmities, and with his owne fearefull and damnable estate, by reason of his sinnes. And therefore *Dauid* saith, *(c) I first considered my wayes: & then I turned my feet into thy testimonies*. The cause why so few in the world do truly repent, is want of consideration from whence they are fallen: & what be their sins & the dreadfull iudgements thereby deserued. For til the mind doe truly conceiue her owne miserie, the heart can neuer rightly hunger after mercie: Sin must be our greatest woe, before Christ become our chiefest ioy. The second part of this remedie is *Repentance it selfe*, for after a man is well acquainted with his wants, and hath thoroughly considered of his owne misery, then he cometh to repent. In the handling hereof five points are to bee obserued. I. What repentance is. II. How it is to be practised. III. Who commandeth it. IV. To whom it is commanded. V. For what they must repent.

For the first. Repentance properly is in the mind, as the word in this place doth import: for it signifieth thus much, After some folly or ouerslip to be better aduised. Repentance then in the mind is a change from euill to good, or a turning from sinne vnto God, *Act. 2. 6, 20*. *Repent and turne to God*. Which latter words expound the former, & plainly shew what repentance is. And this change in the mind standeth in this resolution, whereby a man by Gods grace purposeth to leaue all his former sinnes, and to cleaue vnto God in holy obedience vnto all his commandements: And when this resolution is in the mind, therewithall followeth a turning of the whole man in will, in affections, & in all the actions of his life. This appeareth by that description of the practise of repentance, which *Paul* reduceth to seven heads, viz. *Care clearing of themselves, indignation, feare, great desire, zeale, and reuenge*, *2. Cor. 7. 11*: wherof some are renewed affections, and some reformed actions.

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(a) In 8. 6.

(b) Mat. 24. 38-39.

Cap. 3.

(c) Psal. 119. 39.

The Vse.

Hereby appeareth that their description of repentance is not so fit & proper, which say it standeth in these three: contrition, faith, and new obedience. For contrition is not a part of repentance, but a cause thereof, and so is faith; as Christ teacheth in his well knowne Sermon: *(a) Repent, & beleeue the gospel: where they are plainly distinct. And indeed a man must first beleeue in Christ, & then followeth repentance, and for new obedience it is not a part of repentance, but a fruite thereof. Others make regeneration and repentance all one, but that cannot so well stand: for regeneration goeth before, and repentance followeth after as a fruite thereof, for godly sorrow which is a part of regeneration, causeth repentance. The minde therefore must first be renewed, & then it turneth it selfe vnto God, and withal turneth the whole man. And thus we see what true repentance is.*

II. Point. How must repentance be practised? The practise of it standeth in two things: in true *humiliation*, and true *reformation*. In *humiliation* a man humbleth himselfe vnder the hand of God, making true confession of al his sins, from a sorrowfull heart, condemning himselfe for the same, and earnestly craving pardon for them at the hands of God in Christ. *Reformation* is a change of all bad actions into good; and if case require, a making of satisfaction vnto others for iniuries done vnto them: example hereof wee haue in *Dauid*; who hauing committed those two great finnes of whoredome & murder, when he was reproued by *Nathan*, repented, confessing his sins, and made the one and fiftie Psalmes, and (as it is thought) the 32 Psalmes; therein notably shewing both his humiliation in heart, and reformation of life. So *Manasse*, when he was conuerted, *(b)* he repented, *humbling himselfe before God, and praying for the pardon of his sins, God heard him: And thus came the prodigall childe vnto his father, saying (c) Father I haue sinned against heauen, & before thee, I am not worthy to be called thy son, make me one of thy hired seruants.* And so in all the Psalmes of repentance wee shall see these duties of humiliation and reformation, joyntly practised: as Psalm 6. and 38. and 77. and 130. 143.

(b) 2 Cro. 33.

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repented, *humbling himselfe before God, and praying for the pardon of his sins, God heard him:*

(c) Lu. 15. 21.

And thus came the prodigall childe vnto his father, saying *(c) Father I haue sinned against heauen, & before thee, I am not worthy to be called thy son, make me one of thy hired seruants.* And so in all the Psalmes of repentance wee shall see these duties of humiliation and reformation, joyntly practised: as Psalm 6. and 38. and 77. and 130. 143.

Ydrell

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Here then consider the fearefull practise of the church of Rome in their doctrine of repentance, continued generally for many hundred yeares. Repentance with them standeth in three things: In contrition, in confession of all his finnes to the Priests, and in satisfaction to God by good workes. But all these things may a wicked man doe: For *Indas* was grieued for betraying his master; he confessed his finnes; and also gaue againe the money wherewith he was hired. A second abuse is, that they make contrition a part of the practise of repentance: by contrition we must vnderstand remorse of conscience for sinne; which is no grace of it selfe, though it may bee an occasion thereto in Gods elect. A third abuse is, that they prescribe a confession of all a mans finnes vnto men; which is a gibbet for any mans conscience: wherein they require more than God doth. A fourth abuse is, that they require satisfaction to Gods iustice by mans good workes; whereby they ouerthrow satisfaction by Christ, and exact that of men which none is able to performe. We therefore must reiect their wicked doctrine, brought by the diuell into Gods church, and embrace that sauing repentance which standeth in true humiliation and reformation.

III. point. Who is it that commandeth repentance vnto his church: namely, Iesus Christ. Many, not onely Papists but Protestants, gather vpon this & such like commandements; That God giueth to euery man sufficient grace to repent if he will: For else (say they) hee should but mocke them; in bidding them repent: considering that without his grace it is as impossible for any man to repent, as for a man to rise and walke that is fast bound hand and foote. *Ans.* This collection is vnfound: For the manifestation wherof, I wil first lay down the grounds of the true answer: and then apply the same. First, this commandement to Repent, is not giuen to euery man, but only to the church of God, or to that people which is to be a church: and God giueth it to them for this end, that hee may gather among them his elect. In Gods church there be two sorts of men: Elect, and Reprobate: both which are mingled in this life. Now when the commande-

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ment to *believe and repent*, is given out in Gods church, it is directed properly to the elect; and to the other whom God hath refused only by consequent, because they are mingled with the elect. Again, these commandments bee given to the elect for two causes. I. To teach them, not what they are able to doe of themselves; but what they ought to doe. II. To be an outward means to bring them to repent and believe. For with the commandment Christ is present by his spirit to worke in the elect grace to repent and believe. Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your salvation in feare and trembling*: rendering this reason in the next words, *For God worketh in you both the will & the deed*. In the church there be some reprobates who have the same commandment given vnto them: but for other vses: as I. to keepe them in outward order. II. to teach them their owne impotencie. III. and principally, that God in his iustice may make them void of all excuse at the last day. From hence I answer thus. This proposition is not true, to wit, *If God command men to repent, then hee giueth them grace to repent*, vnlesse it be thus qualified; *That God commandeth them to repent for this end, that they may practise repentance*. For God giueth out his commandments for diuers ends: Some that they may be practised: and others, to take from men all excuse in their disobedience. Thus he commanded *Pharaoh* to let the people go; that by his disobedience his heart might be more hardened, and God more iustly manifest his glorie in his destruction. So he commanded *Isay* to goe & preach vnto the people: not for their conuersion, but to *(a)* *blind their eyes, and to harden their hearts*. And so hee commands the reprobate to repent: but neither directly, as hee doth his children, in whom he intends the practise of repentance; but by consequent, because they liue among his children: nor yet with intent they should obey, but rather to harden them, & to make them inexcusable, because of their sinnes. And therefore in them his commandment cannot import any abilitie to obey.

IV. point. Who bee commanded to repent; namely, *The church of Ephesus*, that is, the minister with the whole bodie of the church. This may seeme strange that he should command them to repent, see-

ing they had alreadie repented at their conuersion. Here therefore wee must learne that there bee two degrees in the practise of repentance: First, the beginning of repentance: Secondly, the renewing of the same. And in these two consisteth the whole state of a Christian mans life. He must begin to repent when he is receiued to mercie: hee must renew that repentance for his daily offences.

If God therefore haue giuen vs grace to repent, we must not content our selues with that good beginning, but adde more repentance dayly vnto it. For no man liueth that hath receiued grace to repent, but he seeth in himselfe continual cause of renewing the same, by reason of his daily fals and wants; for every sin decayeth grace, which must bee repaired by a new practise of repentance. This dutie must needs be practised. It is the most dangerous case that can be for any man to lye in sinne, for sin makes a man liable to all Gods iudgements. And it is not so much the act of sinne, as the lying in sinne that bringeth damnation. For this cause Paul 2. Cor. 5. 20. speaking to those that were reconciled to God, doth still most earnestly beseech them to bee reconciled vnto him, saying, *We beseech you in Christs stead, as though God did beseech you through vs, that ye be reconciled to God*: Intending thereby to prouoke them to the dayly renewing of their repentance, that thereby they might get a more full assurance of their reconciliation.

V. point. For what must they repent? namely, *for the decay of their loue*: not for the want thereof, but for that they suffered it to waxe lesser, both towards God, and his word, and towards their brethren. The same thing is spoken to vs dayly in the ministerie of the word: that whereas our first loue is gone, many hauing fallen from it, and moe hauing none at all, we should vnfeignedly repent of this our decay and want: that if wee haue had loue, and now waxe cold, wee may renew it; and if we neuer had it, we may labour for it; that so we may be answerable to his blessed desire. And here obserue, that Christ enioineth vs a strait repentance. It is not ynough for men to repent them of grosse sinnes, as whoredome, theft, drunkennesse, and such like: but they must repent them of their wants

of grace, as of the knowledge, and feare, and loue of God, and of brotherly loue, and of decay in any grace, bee it neuer so little. Wee haue many iusticiaries in conceit, that bee Pharisaically minded, thinking too well of themselves, that they need no repentance, because they liue ciuilely, and are not tainted with grosse sinnes: But these consider little what God doth here require; euen repentance for our secret wants and decayes. And great reason it should bee so, for els to what end should wee examine our selues of our secret wants, vnlesse wee should repent vs of them, hauing found them in vs?

Againe, if this Church must repent for her wants; then what great cause haue we to repent in this last age of Atheisme, a grosse and common sinne: of outward pride in apparell, a sin flat against Gods word: and for contempt of the Gospel; a sinne that enlargeth it selfe more and more among vs: and for crueltie, and want of mercy and compassion, all which are rise in our church: and may more easily remoue the candlestick from vs, then want of loue could remoue the candlestick from this church. And thus much for the second part of this remedie.

The third part of this remedie is, *to doe their first workes*: that is, shew the like zeale and feruencie of loue to God, to his word, and to their brethren, that they did at the first time of their conuersion. This duetie Christ addeth to the former; because true repentance neuer perisheth in the heart, but alwayes breaketh out in to action in the life.

Here then is an excellent lesson for vs to learne and put in practise: wee must search our owne hearts, & see what good things haue beene in vs: what good motions and desires, or good affections. We must also call to mind our former wayes, and see what good things we haue done: and if in heart or life wee find decay, we must recouer our losse, and seeke to doe our first workes, and strue to continue so doing to our liues end, that so wee may escape this heauie charge of decay in grace. Thus much of the parts of this remedie.

If not, I will come against thee shortly, and remoue thy candlestick out of his place, ex-

cept thou amend.

In these words Christ layes downe a reason to perswade the church of Ephesus to the practise of the former remedie; especially for repentance. This reason containeth three parts. I. A generall commination in these words, *If not, I will come against thee shortly*. II. A particular threatning of a particular iudgement, *And remoue thy candlestick out of his place*. III. The condition of them both: *except thou amend*.

I point. *If not, I will come against thee shortly*; that is, if thou do not practise this remedie, and the duties therein prescribed, especially the dutie of repentance; then will I come against thee shortly. The words may as well be read thus, *If not, then will I come to thee shortly*: For so they are in the originall, and do contain in them sufficient and profitable instruction. God is said to come to any people two wayes, in mercie, and in iudgement. In mercie when hee testifieth his presence by works of mercie: As when Christ in spirit went vnto the old world and preached vnto them in the person of Noe an hundred and twenty yeres before the flood, 1. Pet. 3. 19. 20. Secondly, God comineth in iudgement when he testifieth his presence by iudgements. In the second commandment God saith, *Hee will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children*; that is, he will make inquirie among the children for the fathers sins, and if he find them to liue in the same sinnes that their fathers did, then will hee punish them, this is properly to visit. So in this place, *If thou repent not I will come vnto thee*, and testifie my presence, not in mercie, but in iudgement.

In this generall threatening wee may obserue: that when a Church or people decay in loue to God, to his word, or to their brethren; or els lye in any sinne: then God prepareth himselfe to come vnto them in iudgement, *Amos 4. 12. Because I wil do thus & thou vnto thee*, for thy sinnes, therefore prepare to meet thy God, *Ob Israel*, meaning, that because they lay still in their sinnes, therefore hee would make knowne his presence by more fearefull iudgements. This doctrine according to Christs direction is to bee applied to vs, and to our Church: for the sinnes that were in the church of Ephesus are the sinnes

sinnes of our church and people. They decayed in loue to God, to his word, and to the brethren, so doe we. Nay, generally there is no loue at al in vs, as hath bene shewed: and besides these wants, there be many other grosse sinnes wherein our church and people do lye, as in Atheisme both in iudgement and practise; in contempt and neglect of Gods worship and true religion; in cruelty, oppression, and want of mercie: and that which is more, though God summon men to repent by his dayly iudgements, yet few or none by true humilitie prepare to meet God, and to prevent his iudgements. Securitie spreads it selfe ouer the whole bodie of our people. And this being our case and state, it must needs bee, that God hath bene long since in comming to vs by his iudgements, and at this day he is still comming, because wee still decay in loue and other graces, and more and more goe on in sinne. So that if wee thus continue, the truth is, hee will come shortly vnto vs, and that by most fearefull iudgements. For this was written to the Church of Ephesus, to bee a direction not onely vnto them, but to all churches to the end of the world, that bee in the like or worse case. What shall wee then do?

Our dutie is taught vs in these words (*If not*) that is, if thou repent not. Wee must prevent the Lords comming in iudgement by vnfeined repentance: every man and every family apart must repent priuately, and the whole Church openly and publikely: no way else wee haue, to stay the Lords comming against vs by his fearefull iudgements.

The second part of this reason, is a more particular threatening than the former: *And will remooue thy candlestick out of his place.* Where hee sheweth with what particular iudgement hee will punish this church: namely, by *remoouing away the candlestick.* The meaning whereof may bee gathered out of the former chapter, where particular churches were called candlestickes: therefore here hee threateneth to remooue his church from the citie of Ephesus, to take away the Ministerie of his Gospell, and the profession thereof; and in his iust iudgement to send among them, Ignorance,

Apostasie, and Heresie, in steed of the knowledge of his truth. This particular iudgement must bee referred to the first words, *If not*: that is, if thou repent not, this will I doe; I will make thee to bee no Church, and take my gospell from thee.

In this particular threatening, three points are to bee obserued: one concerning the Minister: the second concerning the whole bodie of the church: the third concerning every priuat man. Touching the Minister note this: If hee shall decay in loue to God, to his word, or to his brethren, or if hee lye in any one sinne knowne to himselfe, it is a meanes to deprive him either of his calling, or of Gods gifts bestowed on him: for this threatening is here directed especially vnto the Angell of this Church of Ephesus. When *Jeremie* had bene wanting in deliuering the Lords will vnto the people, partly for fear, & partly through impatience: then the Lord becomes a Prophet vnto him, saying, *If thou (a) returne, I will bring thee againe, and thou shalt stand before me.* Whereby he would giue him to vnderstand, That if hee returned not, he should cease to be a Prophet vnto him. The same thing is true of all Gods Ministers: if they decay in loue, faile in their dutie, or lye in any sinne, they must speedily renew themselues by repentance, or els God will deprive them either of their calling, or of the gifts thereof. True repentance and the renewing thereof is needfull vnto all Christians; but especially to Gods ministers, if they would continue in his fauour, and stand before him, becomming his mouth vnto the people.

The second point concerneth the whole body of a Church: to wit, if a Church or people decay in loue to God, to religion, and to their brethren; or do lye in any common sinne, they procure hereby the remoouing of the Gospell from them, and the abolishing of true religion. (b) *The Prophet is a fool* (sayth the Lord) *and the man of the spirit is mad:* This was a great and fearefull iudgement: but marke the cause; *All is for thine iniquitie*: that is, for the sinne of the whole church doth God send foolish ministers. If this bee so, then wee haue iust cause in our Church to feare the remoouing of the gospell.

(a) Jer. 19. 15

(b) Hos. 9. 7.

gospell from vs: for there is a generall decay of loue in many, and in the most no loue at all. Many scorne & contemne true religion, and hate the professors thereof. In regard whereof, wee may wonder at the great patience of God, that yet continueth his Gospell among
 (c) 1 Thess. 3. vs: For (a) God giveth men up to strong delusion, so beleeue lyes, because they loue not his truth; Wherefore beeing in this danger, our dutie is, to vse al good meanes to prevent this iudgement of God: which can no other way be done, than by true and vnfeigned repentance by the whole Church in generall: and by euery man apart, and euery familie apart. For when God shall speake suddenly against a nation or kingdome, to root it vp, and to destroy it: if that people repent of their wickednesse, the Lord will repent of the plague and iudgement which hee thought to bring vpon them, *Ierem. 18. vers. 7. 8.*

The third point concerneth euery priuate man: and it is this: If any man decay in loue, or want loue to God and to his brethren, or lye in any sin knowne to himselfe. This is a means to remooue the candlestick from him; to deprive him of his knowledge and other graces of God. The affection of loue in the heart is like the watch of the clocke: if the watch stand, the wheelles stand: as the watch goeth fast or softly, so goe the wheelles answerably. And so it is in man: if his loue to God and to his Gospell do encrease, then doth his knowledge and other graces of God encrease in his hart: but if this loue decay, then other graces decay: and if loue be gone, then farewell all pietie and true religion. If wee would know the cause of such palpable ignorance as is in many that haue long heard the gospell preached, it is nothing but want of loue, *Hebr. 3. 12. 13.* The holy Ghost sheweth by what degrees men come to fall away from God. First, sinne deceiues them, by drawing them to commit it: then their hearts are hardened by custome of sinning: Thence followes vnbeleefe in maine points of Religion: and so they make Apostasie from God, & set themselves against his truth. Take heed therefore of lying in any sinne, for that is the high way to finall Apostacie: rather strue to encrease in loue vnto

God and vnto his word; and so shall all his good graces encrease in thine heart.

Out of this particular threatning some gather, That a man may be cut off from Christ, and fall away finally from true faith and repentance. For (say they) if a whole Church may bee cut off from Christ, and become no Church: then may any one member of the Church bee cut off, and become no member: But a whole Church may be cut off, as here we see, and therefore may any one man. *Answe.* This reason is not good: there is great difference betwene the state of a whole Church, and of one man that is a true member of Christ. For a particular Church is a mixt company of true professors and dissemblers: like vnto a field wherein are good corne and tares; and like vnto a barnes floore, wherein is wheat and chaffe mingled together: and yet all are reputed beleeuers, because they profess the Gospell outwardly. Now by reason of this mixture, it may come to passe, that a particular visible Church may fall away, and become no Church: either when the Godly are taken away, and hypocrites and dissemblers made manifest: or els when true beleeuers waxing few, are not able to maintaine the publike profession of the truth against the might and multitude of the enemies, which may daily encrease. But the case is not so with a particular member of Christ, he cannot finally fall away, as hath beene shewed at large, verse 4. And thus much for the second part of this reason.

The third part of this reason, is the condition of both the former threatenings, in these words: *Except thou amend, that is, I will come in iudgement vnto thee, and take my gospell from thee, vnlesse thou prevent my comming by true repentance.*

Here note, that all the threatenings of the old and new Testament are conditionall: *Iouas* commeth to Ninive, and crieth, *yet forty dayes, and Ninive shall be destroyed.* He sayd no more; but yet that threatening must bee vnderstood with this exception, *vnlesse they repent.* Why (will some say) are the threatenings in Gods word propounded conditionally? *Answe.* Gods whole will and pleasure is one alone

N. B.

N. B.

None in it selfe: and yet it may be thus distinguished, to be partly secret, and partly revealed. Gods secret will is touching those things which hee hath not made manifest vnto men: His revealed will is touching those things which are manifested in Scripture, or do fall out every day. Now Gods secret will is without condition; for as every thing cometh to passe, so God willed it: when good things come to passe, then hee willeth simply: when euill things fall out, then hee permitteeth to be done. And to make Gods secret will conditionall, is to bring Gods will vnder the power of man, and to subiect the Creator vnto the creature. But Gods revealed will is conditionall; because it containeth the matter of mans saluation: and this manner of propounding it, is a most effectfull way to bring the same to passe; for it keepeth men more in awfull obedience, than if it were absolute.

In this condition note two things, that Christ repeateth it twice, both in the beginning of this reason, *If not*: and in the end, *Except thou amend*. Hereby he would giue vs to vnderstand, That when men commit sinne, and lye therein: or when they decay in any grace, then haue they most necessarie cause to repent, if they would escape Gods fearefull iudgements. And seeing our estate is like to the state of this Church, or els worse by much (for wee lye in sinne, and thereby cause God to come to vs in iudgement) as we tender our owne good both in this life and after death, let vs turne from our sinnes and repent, euery man apart, euery family apart, and the whole church publicly: for repentance is most needfull, els would not the Lord haue doubled this condition.

Verse 6. *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the workes of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

These words are a second reason to prooue that which was set downe in the second verse: namely, That *this Church could not abide them that were euill*. In the second verse this was made manifest, by their discoverie of the false Apostles: and here he prooueth it by their affection of hatred, towards the workes of the Ni-

colaitans. These Nicolaitans were certaine heretickes in the primitive Church that held these two opinions: First, that adulterie and fornication were no sinnes: Secondly, that men might communicate with the sacrifices of idolaters in their Idoll temples: and according to their opinions were their practises. These hereticks (as it is thought) came of one *Nicholas*, one of the seuen deacons mentioned *Act. 6.* who though for a while hee did faithfully discharge his dutie outwardly; yet after fell away, and became the head of this hereticall sect.

But this thou hast. This Participle, *But*, hath reference to the former verse. As if he should say, Though this be thy fault, that thou failest in thy first loue; yet for this I commend thee, that thou hatest the workes of the Nicolaitans.

This practise of Christ discovereth the common sinne of this age: which is, to set out in their colours mens faults and infirmities, to their greatest disgrace: and yet by silence and obliuion to burie all their vertues, which are prayse worthy. This ought not to be so; wee must follow Christs example, who with iust reproofe adioyneth due deferred prayse. If our friend or our foe haue a fault, when we are called thereunto, wee may speake of it, and wee must reprove them: but yet withall we must commend the good things that be in them. Secondly, Christ here teacheth vs, That it is not sufficient to any mans good estate before God, that he haue good things in him: for that a man may haue, and yet be in danger to be cut off from Christ. *Saul* had good things in him at the first entrance into his kingdome, but what was hee afterward? *Iehu* was verie zealous for Gods glorie, in killing all the idolatrous priests, but he would not depart from the sinnes of *Sodom*. And *Iudas* no doubt had many good gifts while he was with Christ, but his end was most fearefull: And this church had many good things in her; yet is she in danger of being cut off from Christ: And so many among vs haue excellent gifts: some for knowledge, some for mercie and conceiuing of prayer: & yet for all these they may be cut off from Christ. Therefore wee must not content our selues with these, but labour for the principall which is true, hearty, and vnfained

fained repentance, which we must dayly renew for our continuall fals. And this will keepe vs in Gods fauour, and from his iudgements.

More particularly Christ here commendeth this church, for *hating the errors of the Nicolaitans*. Whereby he would teach vs our dutie if wee bee Christians; namely, to take knowledge of the sinnes and errors of our times, and to hate the same vnfaignedly. Yet note, he commendeth them for hating *their works, not their persons*; giving vs direction how to temper our hatred in the world. We must set it against the sin, not against the person of any man. Some will say, the Prophets prayed against the persons of the wicked. And *Dauid* professed hatred of the men, *Psal. 139. 21*. Doe not I hate them that hate thee? *Ans.* *Dauid* was an extraordinary Prophet, and no doubt had this revealed vnto him, that those his enemies were obstinate, and would not repent. Again, imprecations of the Prophets in Scripture, must bee vnderstood as prophecies of Gods iudgement to come vpon those against whom they prayed. But wee which want that extraordinary spirit, must keepe our selues to our ordinarie rule: Hate the sinnes, and loue the persons.

Further, obserue the workes here hated: namely, Idolatrie, and Adulterie, which are ioyned together in these Nicolaitans. Adulterie is the punishment of Idolatrie; and Idolatrie the punishment of Adulterie. Spirituall Adulterie is punished with bodily adulterie. This was verified in the old Iewes: when they fell a whoring after strange gods, God gaue them vp to vncleane lust. And it is palpable in the Church of Rome: they being fallen to idolatrie, doe abound in all vncleaneesse: for they tolletrate stewes for fornication: and adultery and Sodomie are common among them.

Again, sundry men may here be well admonished, who will bee of no Religion, because there are many sects and schismes among the professours thereof. These men should consider, That in the best Churches planted by the Apostles, there were sects and heresies, euen in the Apostles times, as here in Ephesus. And therefore no maruell, if there bee sects and schismes among vs at this day.

This offence should not moue any to dislike the Gospell: but rather cause them more firmly to cleaue vnto the truth.

Which I also do hate. This Christ addeth to encourage them to goe forward in the vertue for which hee commended them, in hating euill workes: for what could more prouoke them to zeale and constancie therein, than to know they did that which Christ himselfe did? And here wee see, that Christ would haue every member of his Church to bee like minded, and like affected vnto him, as he was man. We must loue those things which Christ loueth, and hate those things which Christ hateth, reioyce wherein Christ reioyceth, and mourne for those things for which Christ mourned. And great reason it should bee so: for wee professe our selues to bee members of Christ, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, for out of his bloud sprung the Church: and there must bee consent and conformitie betwene the head and the members. *Quest.* If Christ hated these wicked men, why did hee suffer them to liue, and not cut them off from troubling his Church? *Ans.* Because hereby he would manifest his loue to his Church, and his iustice vpon the wicked: for hee can bring light out of darkenesse, and good not onely out of good, but out of euill.

Verse 7. Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches: To him that overcometh, will I giue to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

These words containe the conclusion of this Epistle: the scope whereof, is to excite this Church to the more carefull performance of the duties before prescribed. This conclusion hath two parts: a commaundement, and a promise. The commaundement in the beginning of the verse: *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches*. In this commaundement note three points, I. who are commaunded: *Those which haue eares*. II. The dutie commaunded: *They must heare*. III. What they must heare: namely, *What the spirit saith vnto the churches*.

I. point.

I point. The parties commanded are thus set forth, *He which hath an eare*: who these bee, Christ doth more fully expound, Matth. 13. 9. when hee saith: *Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare*. Where hee maketh this distinction of hearers: that some are deafe hearers, some hearing hearers. The deafe hearers are those that bring with them to the ministerie of the word their outward eares only, but their hearts are not affected with it: neither do they care to learne, to beleue, or obey, that which is taught them. The hearing hearers are all such as beside their bodily eares, haue eares pierced in their hearts by the spirit of grace, whereby they doe not onely heare the word outwardly, but their hearts are also affected with it, and made pliable vnto it; so as they beleue it, & bring forth obedience vnto it. This hearing eare is set forth by David, when he saith: (a) *Sacrifice and burnt offerings thou wouldest not haue: but mine eares hast thou opened and prepared; and then I said, Lo I come.* Hereof I say saith, Thou (b) *openedst mine eares and I was not rebellious.* And this hearing eare Lidia had giuen her: when God (c) *opened her heart whereby she became attentive to the word of God preached by Paul.*

By this distinction of hearers which Christ maketh, we may learne, that Gods grace vnto saluation is not vniuersal, that is, God giueth not vnto all men such measure of grace whereby (if they will themselves) they may beleue, repent, and bee saued; For in Christs time, and euer since there haue bene in the church these two kind of hearers; whereof the deafe hearer doth not receiue nor beleue the gospel vnto saluation. Neither is it true, that God giueth grace sufficient vnto all, whereby they might be saued, if they by their malice and sinne did not abolish the same. For though he admit all sorts into his church, yet not all, but some onely haue eares pierced by the spirit of grace that they can heare. And therefore when the Disciples asked Christ, (d) *Why hee spake in parables?* he answered thus, *To you it is giuen to know the will of God, & the secrets of his kingdom: but to others it is not giuen.* Shewing plainly that the gift of hearing to saluation is not giuen to all, & in some made void by their own wilfulness: but to some it is giuen, & they haue hea-

ring eares: and to some it is not giuen and their eares are deafe.

Secondly, seeing this commandement is directed to the hearing hearers; wee must hereby bee admonished to vse all good meanes to become good hearers of Gods word; bringing with vs not onely the bodily eares which wee haue by creation, but the spirituall eares of the heart, which we haue by regeneration. For it is not sufficient to our saluation to receiue the word into the outward bodily eares, vnlesse the inward eares of the heart bee opened, that our soule may bee affected with the word, and fitted to receiue, to beleue, and obey the same. Thus did good king Iosiah heare the law read, the text saith, (e) *His heart melted within him.* And thus did David heare when the Lord said to the church, (f) *Seeke yee my face:* his heart answered, *I seeke thy face O Lord.* And as we must bee carefull to get spirituall eares; so we must take heed of deafe eares. Which is when a man commeth & heareth the word of God, but yet hath no care in his heart to learne, beleue, or obey the same. This deafe eare is a fearefull iudgement of God, whereof we may read, I say 6. 9. where the Prophet is sent, *To make their eares heauie, and their hearts fat, that they might not heare, nor beleue: lest they should turne and be saued.* And this the rather we must looke vnto: because it is a iudgement of God vpon many among vs at this day. The greatest part of hearers are deafe hearers; which appeareth by this, that after long teaching they neither increase in knowledge, nor in faith, nor in obedience: but remaine the same for blindness of mind, hardnesse of hart and profanenesse of life, that they were at their first hearing of the word; these must know that Gods iudgement is on them; and if they would bee saued, they must labour to come out of this estate, & endeouour so to heare with their hearts that they may be turned vnto God both in mind, heart, and life.

II. point. The dutie commaunded: namely, *to heare*. Hearing in Scripture is not onely to listen with the bodily eare: but to be attentive to that which is taught, and with attention to bring faith, conuersion, and obedience euery way. Eph. 4. 21. 22. the hearing of Christ is notably described: It is not so much to conceiue the

(a) Psal. 40. 6.

(b) Ili. 50. 3.

(c) Act. 16. 14.

(d) Mat. 13.

Verf. 11.

(e) 2 Cor. 34.

27.

(f) Psal. 27. 8.

the doctrine of Christ in our minds, and to be able to viter it, *as to die vnto sinne, & to the lusts of the flesh, and to rise to newnesse of life.* And indeed, a man doth heare and learne no more of Gods word, than hee doth beleue and practise. From whence we are againe to be admonished: that we so heare with attention, that by hearing we suffer our selues to bee changed; and that with our change, wee ioyne care to beleue, and conscience to obey. This is that sauing hearing which bringeth eternall life: all other hearing doth increase our sinnes to our further condemnation. Whereby also appeareth the fearefull state of many, who lend onely the outward bodily care to heare the word, but their harts be not mooued, nor their liues changed thereby.

III. point. What is to be heard? namely, *That which the spirit saith vnto the churches.* Which words must bee referred to that which went before, & not to them which followeth: for this commaundement belongs to the matter of the Epistle which went before. The promise following rather concernes the persons themselves than the matter. The things then that are to be heard, are these. Christ his sharpe reproofe for sinne: his threatnings of punishment: a remedie prescribed, and motiues to practise the same, especially repentance: for of all these Christ spake before.

The 7th.

From this, that Christ bids them heare these things which concerned their estate in sinnes, & amendment by repentance, we learne two things. First, that it is a most necessary thing for euery church of God, and euery member thereof, to know and consider their owne wants and sins: and also, the iudgements of God that hang ouer them for the same. Secondly, that after any man, or any church hath considered of their sinnes, and of Gods iudgements; it is a most necessarie thing, to turne vnto God by true repentance, if they haue not repented: and if they haue repented, to renew the same daily, and do it more: that so Gods iudgements both priuat and common may be auoyded. We therefore must hereby bee mooued to search into our owne wayes, to find out our owne sinnes, and to consider of Gods iudgements thereby deferred, that by true repentance wee may

turne vnto God, and so escape his fearefull iudgements.

Further, these words, *What the spirit saith vnto the Churches*, containe two reasons to moue euery man to heare. I. Because they are spoken by the spirit, that is, the holy ghost. II. because they are not spoken to one man, or one church alone, but to all churches. For the first: It may be demanded seeing Christ spake these words, How can it bee said that the spirit speaketh them? *Ans.* Both may stand: first, because all the outward actions of any person in trinitie are common to the rest: But to teach the church is an outward action of Christ, and therefore it agreeth to the father, and to the holy ghost. As when the father created things in the beginning, the sonne also created, and the holy ghost created them. So here when the sonne teacheth, the father teacheth, and the holy ghost teacheth: For as the three persons are one in nature, so must they be ioyned in all outward actions. Secondly, Christ saith the spirit speaketh, because hee now sitting at the right hand of the father, doth not teach his church in bodily presence, but by his spirit, which after his ascension hee sent to be their comforter and instructor.

Here then obserue that the holy ghost speaketh to the church in Scripture. The church of Rome appoints a Iudge to speake vnto men in all matters of controuersie, which is the church, because (say they) A Iudge must speake: and Christ is absent from his church: and the word is a dumbe letter, and cannot speake: Therefore the church must needs bee iudge. But they erre grossly: The church cannot be iudge: It is but Christs minister to put in execution that which hee commandeth. Christ therefore must bee iudge vnto his church by Scripture, which is not a dumbe iudge; for therein his spirit speaketh plainly and sufficiently for the resolving of any point in controuersie, that is needefull in Gods church.

The second reason to attention is, because these things are spoken to *all Churches*. Where we see that things spoken to one church agree to all. From whence we must learne this speciall dutie in reading and hearing Gods holy word: namely, to read and heare with application.

cation. We muſt not reſt in a flouriſhing knowledge of the ſtorie, but apply euery precept and example vnto our ſelues. If it be an example of vertue, wee muſt apply it to our ſelues for imitation: if it be an example of vice, wee muſt apply it to our ſelues to moue vs to eſchew and auoid the like. For God would haue all to learne that which hee ſpeaketh vnto one. And thus much of the commande-ment.

To him that ouercometh will I giue to eat of the tree of life, which is in the middeſt of the paradise of God. Theſe words containe the ſecond part of this concluſion, to wit, a moſt excellent promiſe: wherein conſider two points: Firſt, to whom it is made: Secondly, what is promiſed. For the firſt. The promiſe is made to him that *ouercometh*: That is, to him that in fighting, preuaileth againſt all the ſpiritual enemies of his ſaluation, ſin, ſathan, hell, & condemnation. There be three things requiſit to make a man able to overcome theſe enemies. Firſt, hee muſt be borne anew in Chriſt, of water, and of the ſpirit, 1. Ioh. 3. 4. *He that is borne of God overcometh the world*, ſo by generation hee is freed from the bondage of hell, death, ſinne, and ſathan. Secondly, he muſt haue true faith, by vertue whereof he muſt deny and renounce himſelfe, and bee whatſoeuer he is in the death, paſſion, & obedience of Chriſt. Therefore S. Iohn ſayth in the ſame place: *This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith.* For when a man is in Chriſt, by faith hee is made partaker of Chriſt his victorie vpon the croſſe, and by it receiueth power to ſubdue his owne corruptions, the world, and the diuell. Thirdly, hee that would overcome muſt keepe faith, that is, true religion, and a good conſcience, ſtanding out in life and death againſt all aduerſarie power whatſoeuer.

The 7th.

In this, that life everlaſting is promiſed to them that overcome. Firſt, we obſerue, that the doctrine of vniuerſall grace, affirming that the promiſes of the goſpell for life and ſaluation, belong to all and euery man whatſoeuer, vnleſſe hee will reiect them is a deuice of mans braine. For life eternall is not promiſed to euery man as he is a man comming of *Adam*: but to a man as he is in Chriſt by faith, and a new creature. The promiſes of the goſpell be

vniuerſall indeed to all that overcome: but that is a propertie which reſtraines them wholly to true beleeuers. Secondly, hereby we are taught ſo to liue, that wee may ſay truly in the teſtimonie of a good conſcience, wee haue overcome all our ſpiritual enemies, and doe continually ſtand conquerours ouer them. This is a matter of endleſſe ioy & comfort, which will cheere the ſoule in great diſtreſſe: But to liue and lie in ſinne, is or will bee a hell to the conſcience. What auaille the treasures and honours of this world to any man, while his conſcience ſhal tel him he is a vaſſall to ſin and ſathan? for while hee continueth in that eſtate, he is out of the fauour of God, and hath no part nor portion in the kingdome of heauen. Therefore it ſtandeth vs vpon to labour to feele in our harts the certain euidence of this victorie ouer our ſpiritual enemies, by the ſure teſtimonie of the ſpirit of grace.

The ſecond point is the thing promiſed, to wit, life everlaſting, noted by this gift, *To eat of the tree of life*. And it is ſet out vnto vs by two circumſtances. Firſt, by the cauſe of it: Secondly, by the place where it is to bee found. The cauſe is Chriſt Ieſus: *I will giue to him to eat of the tree of life*. Where he maketh an oppoſition betweene himſelfe and the firſt *Adam*. The firſt *Adam* ſinned; and thereby caſt himſelfe and all his poſteritie out of the earthly paradise, and loſt the benefit of the tree of life: But Chriſt the ſecond *Adam* commeth and ſuffereth for ſinne: and thereby openeth the way to a better paradise, than the firſt *Adam* loſt: and to all that overcome he giueth libertie to enter in, and to eate of the tree of life. The tree of life properly, was a tree placed in the middeſt of the earthly paradise: and it was ſo called, firſt becauſe it was a pledge and ſacrament vnto *Adam*, that he ſhould liue for ever, if hee continued in obedience to God: ſecondly, becauſe it had in it (as may be proued) vertue and power, whereby it would haue preſerued him from death and old age for ever, if he had ſtood in his innocencie.

This earthly tree of life was a figure and ſigne of Chriſt our Sauour and mediator: who liueth an eternall ſpiritual life, not onely as hee is God, but as hee is media-

mediator, & that not for himselfe alone, but for this end, that hee may conuey quickning spiritual life to all that beleue in him: and for this cause hee teareth himselfe the tree of life. Further, hee sayth *He shall giue hereof to eate: To eate*, sometime signifieth to beleue: Ioh. 6. 50. But it cannot here be so taken; For faith endeth with this life, and hath no vse afterward. Therefore *to eat*, in this place signifieth to haue immediat fellowship with Christ in heauen: where Christ shall bee vnto him a tree of life to make him liue for euer.

In this promise note two points, I. In what things eternal life consisteth: namely, in immediat fellowship and communion with Christ in heauen. Secondly, that life eternall standeth not in outward meanes, as meat, drinke, clothing, phylicke recreation, sleep, and such likes: but in an immediat partaking with Christ in all his blessings. So that when Christ is all in all vnto vs immediatly, then do we eat of the tree of life, and thereby shall liue eternally.

II. *Circumst.* The place where eternall life is to be had is in the paradise of God. This paradise of God is the third heauen, a place wherein the Lord doth manifest himselfe in his glorious maiestie, and which he hath prepared for the glory of all his elect. Hereof Christ spake to the theefe on the crosse, saying, *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise*, Lu. 23. 43. and hither was Paul rapt in vision: and *sew and heard things that cannot be vnderstood*, & hee calleth it *the third heauen*, in respect of the heauens vnder it, for the place wherein we breath is the first heauen, the starry firmament is the second heauen, and this paradise of God is the third: which is therefore called paradise, because it is a place of endlesse ioy and pleasure. And the adding of the name of God, doth not only put a difference, betwene it and Adams earthly paradise, but also sheweth it to be a great & most excellent place. So *Rahel* saith, *I haue wrestled with my sister* (a) *the wrestlings of God*, that is, strong wrestlings. And in the Psalmes, *the mountaines of God*, do signifie high and mightie mountaines. And that this paradise is such an excellent place, appeareth at large, Reuel. 2. 3. For therein must come none vncleane thing, but the

Saints & Angels do there enioy the presence of God, and behold his glorie so much as the creature is able to comprehend: There God communicateth himselfe to all the elect, and becometh all things vnto them immediatly: so that this must needs bee a place of all ioy and comfort.

The consideration whereof must admonish vs to seeke the things that bee aboue, that wee may haue a place in this heauenly paradise. For why should we set our hearts vpon the vaine glorie of this world, which passeth away as a shadow and cometh to nothing, and in the end is but labour & sorrow, when we haue all that the world can afford? But the ioyes and glory of this paradise of God be endlesse and vspeakable: Let vs therefore denie our felues, dechend vpon Christ, and in all things keepe faith & a good conscience vnto the end. And thus much for the first Epistle.

Vers. 8. And vnto the Angel of the Church of the Smyrnians, write these things saith he that is the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

In this verse and the rest that follow, to the twelfth, is layd downe the second letter or Epistle of Christ to another Church of Asia, called Smyrna. Before the Epistle Christ giues a second particular commaundement vnto *Iohn*; touching the writing hereof vnto this church in these words, *And vnto the Angell of the Church of the Smyrnians write*: Which is prefixed to this Epistle, that this church, and all other churches of God might bee assured, that *Iohn* had sufficient warrant and calling for the writing hereof. Which thing is necessary to every pen-man of the holy Ghost, that the church need not to doubt of the authoritie of Scripture, but receiue the same as the pure word of God.

Hence we may gather, that all ordinarie Ministers of the gospell must haue warrant and calling for every doctrine which they teach in Gods church: for the Apostles, that were extraordinarie men, of more excellent gifts, might doe nothing without warrant. Of the parts of this commaundement we spake in the first verse of this chapter.

The

3 Cor. 13.

(a) Gen 30. 7.

The 1st.

The Epistle it selfe followeth, containing three parts: a Preface, a Proposition, & a Conclusion. The Preface containeth a preparation to the matter of the Epistle, in these words: *These things saith hee, that is, the first and the last: which was dead, and is alive.* In this Preface he sheweth in whose name this Epistle was written vnto this church, namely, in Christs name: which hee setteth downe for two causes; First, to stir vp the people in this church to a religious attention, and a reuerent care of receiuing the things therein written, as the pure words of Christ Iesus. Secondly, because no commaundment in the matter of Gods worship & religion is to bee received from any creature, but from Christ alone. And therefore this Epistle concerning the true worship and religion of God, is propounded in his name alone. In this Preface Christ is described by two notable Arguments: First, *To be the first and the last*: secondly, *that he was dead, but is alive.* The meaning of them both was shewed in the 17. and 18. verses of the former chapter, whence they are borrowed. By the first, Christ would signifie, that he is euertlasting God, without beginning or ending, before all creatures and after them. By the second, that he is true man, and assumed mans nature to suffer death for our sinnes, and rose againe to liue for euer, and to giue to man eternall life.

In this description two points of doctrine are expressed.

I. That Christ is a person, consisting of two natures; Godhead, and Manhood: *He is the first and the last*, and therefore God: *He was dead, and is alive*, and therefore is true man. If any aske how one person can consist of two natures? *Answer.* As bodie and soule concur to make one man: so the Godhead and Manhood of Christ concur to make one Christ; and therefore are vnited.

II. *Doctr.* Here is the foundation of all true comfort vnto Gods Church and people, in any miserie or affliction. Which standeth in two points: first, that Christ is able to helpe them in any miserie; either by freeing them quite from it, or easing them in it, seeing hee is God, *the first and last*. Secondly, that as hee is able, so hee is willing and ready to helpe

them; for he is man, who tooke on him our nature, died for vs, & rose againe vnto life, to giue to vs eternall life. This is the verie scope and end for which Christ thus describeth himselfe to this church that was in affliction. Here then we haue direction, where and whence to seeke for true comfort in any tribulation of this life: namely, wee must haue recourse to Christ, and in him consider both his abilitie & his willingness, to ease al his children in affliction. And by these we must arme our selues against despaire, and against immoderat griefe and sorrow vnder the crosse.

Verse 9. *I know thy workes, and tribulation and pouertie (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemie of them which say they are Iewes and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.*

Here beginneth the Proposition of this Epistle, containing the matter and substance of the whole Epistle. This proposition hath two parts: a commendation of this church: and counsell how to behaue her selfe in the time to come. The commendation is in this ninth verse wherewithall are mingled some comforts vnto this church, beeing in affliction.

I know thy workes. These words were handled in the former Epistle. The meaning briefly is this: I know all thy dealings, and thy wayes, I know the whole tenor of thy life; and I doe withall well like and approoue of them. Here Christ setteth downe an excellent propertie touching himselfe: namely, that he seeth and knoweth all things whatsoeuer, nothing is hid from him: and that this Church might bee resolu'd hereof, he repeateth this vnto them: *I know thy workes.* Neither is it any vayne repetition, beeing indeed the ground of all true pietie, and sincere obedience.

Wee therefore in all our affaires are here taught to labour, to bee fully resolu'd in our consciences, that Christ is with vs, and seeth vs, and knoweth the whole tenour of our wayes in thoughts, words, and deeds. *Dauid* had learned this, when as he sayd, (a) *Thou knowest my sitting and my rising, thou vnderstandest my*

K ij thoughts

(a) Psal 139.
2.9.

thoughts a farre off. Thou compassst my paths and my lying downe, and art accustomed vnto all my wayes: there is not a word in my tounge, but thou knowest it wholly. This persuation is very necessarie; for it will moue a man to make conscience of euery thought, word, and action, and of his whole behauiour: but where this persuation is wanting, there is no religion in the heart, nor good behauiour in the life. When this takes place, Religion beginneth and encreaseth with it; so doth good conscience and true obedience: for hee that hath the Lord alwayes before him, will not greatly fall, *Psal. 16.8.*

And tribulation. Marke here how workes, that is, a godly conuersation, and tribulation goe together. Hence wee learne, that God will haue tribulations ioined with his grace; where he bestowes his graces, there also hee layeth tribulation: and that for weightie causes, as to humble them for their sins past, to make triall of their faith and other graces, and to preuent in them sinnes to come. The consideration whereof must moue all Gods children in this our Church to looke for some tribulation: for God hath bestowed among vs plentie of his graces, with long peace, and many outward blessings: and his will is, that trouble and affliction should accompany the same.

Further, Christ saying, *I know thy tribulations*, would hereby comfort this Church; as if hee should say, True it is thou art in great trouble, but it cometh not by chance, but by the speciall providence of my father; and I do know and regard the same. *Psal. 113.6.7.* The raising vp of the poore and needie, is made a fruit of Gods beholding the things that are done vpon the earth. This is an excellent comfort for any church or people that bee in affliction: for when they shall know, that beside the hand of God therein, Christ Iesus regardeth their sorrowes; this must needs arme them with long suffering and ioyfulness. We in this Church (as hath beene shewed) may persuaue our selues, that God will send tribulations among vs; now when they come, what shall we doe? Shall wee sinke vnder them? No, but wee must now forecast to vse the meanes whereby

we may stay our hearts vnder the smart and burden of them; that is, by setting our hearts in this persuation, that Christ seeth our affliction, and withall hath speciall care to comfort or deliuer vs, as hee seeth most for his glory, and the good of our soules.

In the next words Christ setteth downe two kinds of tribulations in this church, *Pouerty & Reprob.* By *Pouerty* he meaneth want of temporall things, to maintaine this naturall life. Where obserue fundry things, I. That true religion and pietie will not free any from outward pouertie. The religion of this church was excellent, and yet they were in want: and therefore let no man think, because he is godly, hee shall bee rich, or not fall into pouertie. If it be said: *God's* 1. Tim. 4.8. *ness* hath the promise not onely of the life to come, but also of this life, that is, of earthly blessings and riches: I answer, it is true; but yet with difference: Eternall blessings onely are promised absolutely; and temporall blessings with restraint, namely, if they serue for Gods glory and the good of his children: otherwise they must want as this church did. II. The Lord would comfort this Church in her pouerty, by saying that hee knew it and regarded it. Where wee see a meanes to comfort all those that be in want of outward blessings: They must consider, that Christ seeth & obserueth their want whatsoeuer; and if they bee his seruants, he will free them from it, so it be for his glorie and the good of their soules; or els arme them with patience to beare it, if they pray vnto him. III. Christ here approveth of works, where hee acknowledgeth pouertie: so that good workes and pouertie may stand together. And therefore good workes doe not consist onely in large almes, as the Church of Rome would haue it; though these haue due reward and prayse in their place. But every worke of a mans lawfull calling, done in obedience to God, with an honest heart, from a good conscience, and for Gods glorie, is a good worke, bee the calling neuer so base. Thus may the shepherd please God in his calling, as well as the magistrat or minister. For it is not the matter of the worke that commendeth it to God, but the manner of doing.

But

But thou art rich. Here Christ intendeth both to prayse and to comfort this church: as if hee should say, Notwithstanding thy outward povertie, yet thou art rich in God, as *Luke 12.21.* Men are rich in God in two respects: I. when they are reconciled to God in the merits of Christ, *2 Cor. 8.9.* Christ became poore for our sakes, that we through his povertie might be made rich: that is, that wee might haue the pardon of sinne, and bee receiued into Gods fauour. Hereupon *David* calls the Lord his portion and his cup. And *du-able riches, and righteousnesse are with wisdom, Prou. 8.18.* II. When they receiue his grace, whereby they are enabled to bring forth good works, both in duties to God and man. Of this *Paul* speaketh, when he exhorteth rich men to *be rich in good works, and to lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, 1 Tim. 6.16.*

In this commendation sundry duties are to be learned: I. poore men are here taught, seeing God denieth vnto them earthly riches and wealth, to labour to be rich in God, to bee reconciled vnto him in Christ, and to get such grace, that they may do good duties both vnto God and man, in faith and with a good conscience. II. Rich men, on whom God bestoweth outward wealth, must hereby bee admonished to embrace *Pauls* charge, *1 Tim. 6.17.18.* Aboue al things seeke for true riches in the liuing God: and not suffer these outward blessings to puffe vp their minds; but vse them as a means to make them rich in God, by getting Gods grace doing good workes, and distributing to the poore. This admonition is most necessarie, for though the promises of Gods grace be not denied vnto the rich; yet sure it is, riches doe choke the seed of grace in the heart, and hinder the care men ought to haue for spirituall riches. And hence it cometh, that moe of the poorer sort receiue and obey the gospel than of the rich. III. Herein behold the madnesse of the world. For the most mens greatest labour and care is after worldly wealth and honour: neuer regarding the true treasures of Gods grace which will commend them vnto God, when the other must perish, and the wicked owners thereof. Let vs therefore iudge as Christ doth of true riches,

and accordingly labour to bee rich in his sight.

The second part of their tribulation is the reproach and blasphemie of their enemies in these words: *I know the blasphemie of them which say they are Iewes and are not, &c.* that is, I know the greuous slanders and reuilings which thine enemies fasten vpon thee. For *Blasphemy* signifieth not onely speeces of disgrace against God, but also against men: As *Naboth* was accused, *1 Kin. 21.10* to haue blasphemed God and the king. And of this *Paul* saith: *When we are reuiled, we bless; when we are blasphemed, we pray, 1 Cor. 4.12.13.*

Hence wee learne, that all Churches and men that desire truely to serue God, and to keepe good consciences, must looke for slaunders and reuilings: Neither must this seeme strange vnto them; for Christ hath sayd, it must bee so. Nay, rather they might maruell, if they should suffer no reproches for Christs sake, seeing he hath said: *Cursed are you, which all men speak well of you, Luke 6.26.* It is indeed a greuous thing, to bee so euill rewarded for well doing: but this must be their comfort, and ground of patience, That Christ heareth and knoweth euery reproch, and will in his good time remedie the same.

The persons which blaspheme this Church are thus described: *Which say they be Iewes, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan.* As in other famous cities, so in *Smyrna* dwelt some of the Iewes who had their Synagogues, that is, such places of assemblies, where they serued God after their manner: and though they denied Christ, yet they thought themselves to be the only true worshippers of God in all the world; and therefore did blaspheme and rayle vpon the Christians that beleued in Christ. And of these Christ saith, though by birth they were Iewes, yet indeed they were not the *Israel* of God, nor his true worshippers, as they accounted themselves. Whereby in generall wee may see, from whom come raylings and reproches on Gods seruants; namely, from those which say they are true worshippers of God, and are not: *For he is not a Jew that is one outward, Rom. 2.28.* Hee therefore that slandereth the truth and the profess-

sots thereof is an enemy to Christ, as well as to his servants: for no friend of Christ can possibly speake euill of his Gospell and religion. This should be considered for the comfort of the godly, because they that endeavour to serue God in sinceritie, are of all men most subject to reproch: *He that refraineth from euil, maketh himselfe a prey*, 1. May. 59. 15.

Touching these Iewes, two points are to be considered: I. What they are in their owne opinion: II. What they are in the iudgement of Christ. For the first, because they were Iewes, by birth descending from *Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob*, Gods auncient seruants, therefore they thought themselves the onely true worshippers of God, as their forefathers were. And this is the manner of all wicked men; to blesse (a) *themselves in their wickednesse*: and whatsoeuer they do, yet still to say and thinke, God will blesse them. Take an hereticke, who ouerthrowes the truth of God by his errors, and he will say he teacheth that which in conscience he is perswaded is the truth, for which hee will shed his blood, and whereto hee would haue all men yeeld. So take a professed witch, man or woman; they will say, all that they doe is by the power of the good Angels, and by some speciall gifts giuen vnto them aboue others; but they wil not be brought to acknowledge, that they doe any thing by vertue of their league with the diuell, from whence indeed cometh all they doe. And so the carnall Protestants of our time, they looke for Gods blessings in this life, and for eternall life by Christ after death, and yet walke in the broad way to destruction, in sinne and profanenesse. Thus they blesse themselves in their euil wayes, and make Christ a pack-horse for their iniquities. But in the example of these Iewes wee must learne to lay downe all presumptuous thoughts of our owne goodnesse and vaine persuasions of Gods fauour, without his true grace; and rather looke vnto our sinne, and be humbled for them, that God may liue vs vp. II. point. Christs iudgement of them is this: *They are not Iewes, but a Synagogue of Sathan*; that is, a company of men that seemed to serue God after the Iewish maner, but did indeed worship the diuell. Herein are many things to be

considered. I. How this could bee true of any company of the Iewes, who were the chosen people of God? *Ans.* Election is twofold: speciall, and generall. Gods speciall election is, when in his eternall counsell he chuseth a man to life eternal; and this befall not all the Iewes, but some onely: Gods general election is, when he vouchsafeth any people to become his visible church, to haue & carry the outward signes and priuiledges of his covenant: & thus was the nation of the Iewes elected, and therefore were circumcised, & receiued the passeouer. From this general election, a church and people may fall, as the Iewes did, and so became the Synagogue of Sathan; beeing indeed neuer within the particular calling, from which a man cannot fall away: for *Gods election remaineth sure*, 2. Tim. 2. 19. *His calling is without repentance*, Rom. 11. 29.

II. point. At what time did the Iewes begin to be a synagogue of sathan? *Ans.* Not at the crucifying of the Lord of life, (though that were a most hainous sinne) for though some therin sinned of malice, yet many did it of ignorance. This Peter confesseth, *Act. 3. 17*. And therefore in his first Sermon after Christs ascension telleth them, *that the promise belonged to them and to their seed, that were a far off*, *Act. 2. 39*. But when the Apostles had a long time preached Christ vnto them, & conuincied their consciences out of the old testament that he was the true Messias, & yet they remained obstinat, rejecting and persecuting both them & their doctrine; then they ceased to bee a church of God, & became the synagogue of sathan: for this cause *Paul and Barnabas shooke off the dust of their feet against them, and turned to the Gentiles*. Wherby we see when a church of God becommeth no church, namely, not so soone as they hold an heresie: for the church of the Galatians held iustification by workes, yet thereupon ceased not to be a church; but when they embrace an heresie against the foundation of religion, & be conuicted of it, not by priuie men, but by Apostolical authority, or by publike iudiciall sentence of the Church from the authoritie of Gods word.

Hence we may learne, first, what wee are to thinke and iudge, of the church of the Papists, of the Libertines and Anabaptists, familie of Lone, and such like:

name-

(a) *Psal. 10. 3.*

Rom. 7.

12. 5.

Act. 13. 46. 51

namely, that they are no churches of God: for they hold heresies against the foundation, which the Church long agoe condemned by Apostolicall and Iudiciall authoritie. Again, here we learn what to iudge of this our church of England: many there be that say wee haue no church among vs, because some priuat men haue reprooued the same for some things that are amisse, and yet they are not reformed. But this is a fond and foolish reason; For first, the error must be against the foundation, and yet that maketh not a church to bee no church, vnlesse it be obstinately maintained after sufficient reproofe and iudiciall conuiction by the word of God: But no such thing can be affirmed of vs, and therefore we remaine the true church of God.

III. point, How became the Iewes a Synagogue of Sathan? *Ans.* Through their vnbeleefe: as is plainly prooued, Rom. 11. 20. *Obiect.* But they held the word of God and defended the books of the old Testament, for which wee are beholding vnto them. *Ans.* Indeed they held the letter: but if wee regard the true meaning of the Prophets, and the subiect of the old Testament, which is Iesus Christ, that they rased out and denied. And so though they held the letter, yet worshipping God out of Christ, they worshipped an Idoll, and not that God which would giue vnto them eternal life: For out of Christ there is no saluation. And so wee may say of the church of Rome: though they hold the bookes of the Old and New Testament, with the Creed of the Apostles (whereupon some say we ought not to depart from them,) yet the truth is, that indeed they hold them not. The Christ of the Papists is but a fained Christ: for they take from him both his nature (especially his humanitie) and his offices: and therefore wee haue iust cause to seperat from them.

This example of the Iewes, that were once a most famous people, but are now become the Synagogue of Sathan, must be set before our eyes continually. For when all the world were reiectes, they stood high in Gods fauour: but now for their vnbeleefe they are cast off from God, and are become the Synagogue of the diuill. Which must admonish vs, *Not to be high minded, but so feare, Ro. 11. 20.*

For if God spared not the naturall branches, them that were his first chosen people, he will not spare vs that are but wild oliues grafted into the true vine. We must therefore take heed of vnbeleefe, & labor for true faith, which wee must testifie by obedience in our liues & conuersations.

Vers. 10. Feare none of those things which shouldest suffer. Behold I shall come to passe that the diuill shall cast some of you into prison that yee may bee tried, and yee shall haue tribulation ten dayes. But thou faithfull vnto the death, and I will giue thee the crowne of life.

Here followeth the second part of the proposition of this Epistle, to wit, that heavenly and spirituall counsell which Christ giueth to this Church of Smyrna: which I call *counsell*, because in the next chapter our Sauour Christ calleth such kind of instruction by the name of counsell. First, here note that Christ commendeth this church, and giueth her counsell, but doth not at all rebuke her for her faults, as he did the church of Ephesus. Hence the Papists gather, that Gods church, and so the members thereof, may liue without sinne, and fulfill the law. But they are deceived: Christ therefore abstaineth from reproofe of this church, not for that he had not any thing against them, but for these two causes especially. First, because this church of Smyrna did truly repent and beleefe, & did not decay in grace as the church of Ephesus did; and therefore had the pardon of her sinnes, and was in Gods loue and fauour. Secondly, this church did in deuor to obey Christ, and to testifie her faith and loue therby. Now God accepteth the desire and will of obedience in his children, as obedience it selfe: & therefore did not reprove them for any fault that was among them.

Seeing this church being in affliction is so farre forth accepted, that Christ reproveth nothing in her; wee are taught, it is profitable for Gods church & people, sometime to bee in affliction: for thereby are the gifts and graces of God preserved, as Faith and Repentance; and many greivous sinnes prevented, which otherwise Gods children might fall into.

The

The counsell it selfe containeth three parts. A precept. A prophesie. And a precept againe. The first precept is in these words, *Fear none of these things which shoulde suffer.* This precept may seeme to be against other places of Scripture, as Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your salvation in feare and trembling.* And Rom 11. 20. *Be not high minded, but feare.* Answer. There bee three kinds of feare. I. naturall feare. II. feare proceeding from grace. III. a distrustfull feare proceeding from vnbeleefe. I. The naturall feare is a declining and eschewing of death and those things that tend thereto: this feare is in all men, in as much as every thing desireth to preserve it selfe: this was in Christ, who in his agonie feared death, as it was a separation of soule and bodie asunder: yet this was no sinne in him, but onely an infirmite without sinne. The second kind of feare, is that which commeth from grace, Mal. 1. 6. *If I be a master where is mine honour, If I be a father where is my feare.* This feare is a reverent awe towards God in regard of his mercie and iudgements: and this is a vertue and no sinne. The third is distrustfull feare; when men for affliction forsake religion and obedience to God, standing more in feare of men than of God: and this is that feare which Christ in this place forbiddeth, being a sinne that draweth men from God vnto perdition.

In this commaundement Christ doth two things. First, he giueth them and vs to vnderstand, what is the sinne in which every man is conceived, and the seed whereof remaineth stil in the children of God; namely, distrustfull vnbeleefe, whereby men feare the authoritie of the creature more than the glorious maiestie of the eternall God: which proceedeth from this, that men consider not of God as hee extendeth his providence ouer all things, and as hee is a mightie iudge, taking reuenge vpon all sinne and wickednesse.

Secondly, here Christ describeth the meanes whereby Gods people may arme themselves against all perils and troubles whatsoever, to wit, *Christian fortitude*: which is a gift of God proceeding from true faith, inabling a man to lay aside all feare, and with courage to vndergoe all dangers whatsoever, that hee may in life

and death maintain faith & a good conscience. This vertue God prescribed to the prophets when they were to enter into their calling, and our Sauour Christ to his Apostles, & to this church of Synyria And it were to be wished that all the ministers of the gospell might speake vnto their people as Christ speaketh vnto this church, *Fear not.* But the truth is, if they deale faithfully they must change their note, & say with Isai, (a) *Wail and howle ye priests & people, lying in sackcloth and ashes, because the day of the Lords vengeance is at hand.* For it is lamentable to see the state of the whole bodie of our people, of whom wee may generally say with the prophet, (b) *There is no knowledge of God in the land.* And where knowledge is, there is little conscience to liue thereafter. Consider also how the most are carnall minded, dead in sin, they saour not the things that pertaine to Gods kingdom, but their hearts are wholly possessed with earthly desires & delights, and spirituall things affect them not. Yea in all places we shal see that as natural sleep wrappeth vp the senses of the body: so a spirituall slumber benummeth their minds & hearts. For though God preach daily vnto vs by his iudgements, yet like the old world wee know nothing of the euill day: wee neuer call to mind the iudgement to come And if hereunto we ioyne the common crying finnes of this land, as swearing, curling, oppression, sabbath-breaking, drunkennesse, whooredom, and all vncleannesse, yea Atheisme it selfe the ground of all: How can wee say with Christ, *Fear not?* yea rather we must call men to repentance in sackcloth and ashes. For God is iealous for his glory, neither will he alway be chiding, nor winke at our iniquities, he hath whet his sword, and bent his bow, and vnlesse we repent the day of hauock wil come shortly, wherein he will take vengeance vpon all our iniquities. And although this bee the common state of our land, yet Christ hath his remnant among vs who mourne for the finnes and abominations of the times, & do endeavor to keepe faith & a good conscience in all things: and to these it may be said, *Fear not*, but take to your selues christian courage, & arme your selues therewith; lay aside all distrustfull feare, and glorifie God in your hearts,

(a) Isai 1. 13.

(b) Isai 4. 1.

hearts, strue to keepe the faith in a pure conscience vnto the end, & so shall Christ appeare to your ioy when the wicked shall be ashamed. And to moue Gods children to this Christian fortitude; first, let them consider what a iudgement of God is due vnto them that are distrustfully fearful, when they should suffer any thing for the name of Christ, Reuel. 21. 8. *They must haue their reward in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone among the damned.* Secõdly, let them obserue the Lords presence and his gracious promise of protection in distresse, *He will cause his Angels to pitch their tents about them that no perill shall hurt them* 2. King. 6. When a mightie armie came against *Elisba*, his seruant was fore afraid; but marke how he comforted him, (a) *Fear not* (saith he) *for they that be with vs are more than they that be with them:* And so it is with Gods children, Thirdly, let them consider that it is a most honorable estate to suffer any thing for the name of Christ. And therefore the Apollles reioyced exceedingly when they had bin beaten, *That they were counted worthy to suffer any thing for Christs sake.* Gal. 5. 14. *The crosse of Christ is Pauls wholer reioycing.* And if he would boast of any thing it should be herein, 2. Cor. 12. 9. 10. Thus were gods seruants affected: and therefore they that repent & beleue, need not to feare what flesh can do vnto them.

The second part of Christs counsel is his prophesie; which is a prediction of that particular affliction which this church of Smyrna should suffer: and first he prefixeth this note of attention: *behold:* then he setteth downe the prophesie it selfe, *The diuell shall cast some of you into prison. Behold,* hereby he would teach vs an excellent lesson: that we must often consider before hand of the day of our visitation, wherein God will try vs, least we perish therein: our Sauour Christ (b) *Lu. 19. 41.* coming towards Ierusalem (b) *weped ouer it,* & when he came to it he foretold the finall destruction of that citie: which therefore came vpon them, because they considered not the day of their visitation, neither the things therein foretold that did concerne their peace. And the like destruction wil come vpon vs in this land, if we consider not the daies of our visitation: let vs therefore now in the

dayes of peace forecast what is to come, and prepaire our selues against the day of the Lords triall; and so shall wee escape the fearefull and finall destruction that shall come vpon the wicked. *It shall come to passe that the diuell shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tryed: and ye shall haue tribulation ten daies.* These word containe Christs prophesie, wherein he sheweth himselfe to be true Gods for as *Isay* in many places sheweth, it is a properie of God alone to (c) foretell a particular affliction that is contingent. But some will say, others can foretel certain things to come; as the Physition, the sick mans death; and the Astronomer the time of the eclips; how then is this proper to God? *Ans.* The Physition foretellethe the sicke mans death, only by vertue of causes present, in which the future death is to him apparant: And the Astronomer foretellethe the eclips by the consideration of the naturall and ordinarie course of the heauens in present, and by that can come to, foretell it in time to come. So that simply none can foretell a thing contingent, except he see it present in the causes; but Christ foretellethe things to come simply of himselfe, though no cause be present, as appeareth in this place.

In this prophesie Christ describeth this affliction by sundry arguments. First by the cause thereof, which is the diuell. Secondly, by the parties that were to be afflicted. *Some of you of the church of Smyrna.* Thirdly, by the kind of punishment, *Imprisonment.* Fourthly, by the end thereof, *their triall.* And fifthly by the time of it continuance *for ten daies.*

1. *Argument.* The cause of their affliction is the diuell. *Quest.* How can that be, for being a spirit he cannot offer violence to mens bodies to cast them into prison? *Ans.* True, but he is the God of the world that ruleth in the hearts of the wicked: he inclineth their wils to hate Gods children, hee stirreth them vp to persecute, and maketh them his instruments to cast Gods seruants into prison.

In this that the diuel causeth the afflictions of Gods church, we learne sundry points. 1. What manner of men those be that persecute the church of God: namely, wicked men, such as are inspired by Sathan, and wholly guided in mind, will, and

(a) 1. Tim. 7.
15.

and in affection by him: this made Paul say, (a) *He was the head of all sinners*; because in persecuting the Church of God he was guided by the diuell, & made his minister: which must teach vs to take heed how we persecute the Church of God, or any member thereof, either in word or deed: for he that doth so is the vassall of Sathan in that action, & while he holdeth that course he sheweth himselfe to bee no better than one that is wholly guided by the diuell: for the diuell is the principal agent in persecutiōs, and wicked men be his instruments.

II. Hereby wee are taught to take pittie vpon all persecutors, be they kings or monarchs, or whatsoever. Yea wee must pray for them, though they be our enemies: because they are possessed and guided by the diuell, and in their persecutions do his will, and become his seruants and vassals.

(b) 1. Ki. 3. 13.

III. Hence wee learne with what weapons we are to defend our selues in time of persecution: namely, with spirituall weapons of praiers, & inuocation, wherein we must shew our faith in Christ, our repentance & true obedience; for our principall aduersarie is a spirit, and hereby we shal best defend our selues against him, and get the chiefeest victorie. *Elias* for his prayer is called (b) *The Chariot and horsemen of Israel*. Nothing doth so much preuaile in troubles and persecutions, as prayer from a penitent & beleeuing heart. And if god should send a forraign nation against vs, howsoever the weapons of the souldier must bee vsed, yet our principall weapons must bee praier and fasting: for thereby we shall soonest foile our principal aduersary Sathan, who feareth not the speare nor sword, and yet will flie before these spirituall weapons.

II. *Argument*. The parties that must be afflicted, were some of the church of Smyrna, not all.

III. *Argument*. The kind of their affliction was imprisonment.

IV. *Argument*. The end of their affliction, was the triall of their faith, hope, loue, and patience, with other graces of God, and the manifestation of the same, first to their owne conscience, and then vnto the world. In these three arguments note first a special point touching Gods providence, to wit, that it is the first cause

of all, aboue all causes, ruling and disposing them all. God in gouerning the world by his providence vseth instruments of two sorts: good, or euill. The good instruments are good Angels, and regenerat men; by whom cometh no disorder, for God worketh both in them and by them. Wicked instruments, are the diuell and wicked men, and though God vse them well, yet from them is much disorder and sinne: for he worketh not in them, but onely by them, permitting their sinnes and disorders, that thereby he may shew forth his iustice, mercie, and power: which herein doe notably appear in vsing these instruments, which be euill in themselves, that notwithstanding their malice he causeth wonderfull order: for first by his providence he restraineth their furie and rage, so as they cannot shew it to the full as they desire. See this in the diuels persecution against this church: he cannot kill the members hereof, but onely cast them into prison: hee cannot imprison them all, but some onely: neither can he keepe them in prison alwaies, but for a short time. Secondly, by his providence he turneth all that they doe, to the good of the Church: the diuell afflicteth the Church for the destruction and damnation of their soules; but God turneth it to their good, to make their faith manifest, and to prevent many sinnes in them. These things wee should often thinke of, and blesse Gods name for euer, that by his providence he doth maister Sathans power & malice: and so dispose of all actions of the wicked, that they tend to the good of his church. This must also teach vs to renounce our selues, and to put all our trust and confidence in Christ his providence, making that our comfort, our stay and protection in all distresse.

Againe, whereas the end of afflictions in Gods church is the trial of faith & other graces; hence wee are taught many things: First, to labour to haue in our hearts the power of godlinesse in true faith and vnfained repentance; and not to content our selues with the forme and shew thereof in a naked profession only: For we must be cast into the fierie triall of afflictions to see what is in our hearts. In the day of triall shewes will not serue the turne, nor stand vs in steed: Trials and

and afflictions will consume them, as the fire doth drosse and stubble. Secōdly, to bee ioyfull and glad, when the Lords will is to call vs to suffer for his sake: Because this is a means to make knowne good graces in our hearts. *James 1. 2. Brethren, count it exceeding great ioy, when yee fall into diuers afflictions, knowing that the tryall of your faith bringeth forth patience.*

V. Argument. The time of their continuance in affliction is *for tenne daies*. By which some vnderstand a long time: according vnto that which *Jacob* saith to *Laban*; *Thou hast changed my wages tenne times*; that is, often. And so the *Israelites* are said to sinne, *(a) tenne times against the Lord*; that is, many times: but this exposition will not so fitly stand in this place; for Christ intendeth to comfort this church. But what comfort could this bee, to say they should be so long in affliction? Others expound *ten daies* to be *ten yeares*. And so the word *daies* is sometime vsed to betoken yeares: for in the Scripture there be yeares of daies, as well as yeares of weekes. But though this exposition may well stand with the words, yet none can shew by true record, That this church was afflicted only for tenne yeares and no longer. Therefore a third exposition is this, That by *ten daies* is meant some short space of time; and so I vnderstand this place, because it is most futable to all circumstances. For here Christ intendeth to comfort this church, which is most fitly done, by foretelling a short time of their affliction.

The Vse. In this circumstance of time, Christ setteth downe two things: First, that the affliction of Gods Church and people are for a certaine time decreed of God, which cannot bee changed, lengthened, or shortened. Particular proofes hereof we haue in Scripture. So God foretold *Abraham*, That the afflictions of his people should be *430 yeares*; which time they were afflicted, especially in *Egypt*: but at the same night when those yeares were expired, they were led out of *Egypt*, and their afflictions ceased, *Exod. 12. 46*. And the *70 yeares* captiuitie were well knowne vnto *Daniell* to bee determined of the Lord: And therefore he armed himselfe with patience

during that time, and prayed not for deliuerance, vntill it should bee expired.

The consideration hereof must moue vs to arme our selues with patience when God shall send affliction, because wee cannot deliuer our selues before the time which God hath appointed: for the continuance of our afflictions is set downe by God, and cannot be changed by vs. Secōdly, here Christ sheweth, that the afflictions of his church are but for a short time: and therefore *Paul* ^{(a) 2. Cor. 4. 17.} calleth them *momentarie*, in regard of the eternal weight of glorie which shall be reuealed at the end of this life, and neuer haue end. Which is a singular ground of comfort vnto the child of God in any distresse.

Thus we see the parts of this prophesie; yet in the words there is a further thing intended, for euery word containeth a reason to comfort this church: as first from the cause of their persecution, which is the deuill; and therefore they must not feare, for if hee cast them into prison, their case is good, he is Gods enemy, and so the Lord is on their side, who then can bee against them to doe them hurt? Secondly, not all your whole Church, but onely some (saith Christ) must be afflicted. Thirdly, Sathan cannot kill you, but enely cast you into prison. Fourthly, his imprisonment shal not tend to your damnation, but make for the triall of your grace. And lastly, it is but for a short time. In all which you may see the power of Gods providence ouerruling your enemy, and turning his rage vnto your saluation: and therefore take comfort and courage vnto your soules, lay aside all feare and al dread, and keepe faith and good conscience to the end.

The third part of this counsell, is a most blessed precept, containing most heavenly aduice: *Be thou faithfull vnto death, and I wil giue thee the crowne of life.* Gods seruants are called faithfull, in regard of their fidelitie which they owe to God: and that is in two respects: I. Euery member of Christ is baptized, wherein God for his part promiseth Christ, with life euerlasting: and the partie baptized promiseth vnto God againe, that hee will denie himselfe, and call

cast himselfe wholly vpon God in life and death, and keepe faith and a good conscience. Which promise is called *the stipulation of a good conscience*, 1. Pet. 3. 21.

And when a man keepeth this promise made to God, then is he faithfull, and when hee breaketh it, hee is vnfaithfull.

I I. God giueth vnto his children many good gifts and graces, as knowledge, faith, repentance, and care to keepe a good conscience, which he would haue them in all things to keepe and preserue.

And therefore Paul biddeth *Timothie*,

(a) 1. Tim. 6.
20.

(a) keepe that thing which is committed vnto him of trust. Now a man is faithfull vnto God, when hee maketh good vse of the gifts and graces of God, and still preserueth the same, vsing them for Gods glorie and the good of his owne soule, and of his brethren: like as wee are counted faithfull with men, when wee keepe that thing safe which is committed vnto vs of trust. The meaning then of Christ is this: Thou hast made a promise vnto mee in baptisme, to renounce sinne and Sathan, and to keepe faith and a good conscience vnto death; therefore performe this thy promise: and for those gifts which I haue committed of trust vnto thee, see thou keepe them well, and vse them to my glorie in the good of thy brethren.

Against this precept, three sorts of men offend, and bee vnfaithfull vnto God. I. Those that being baptized, doe yet liue in ignorance and securitie, neuer seeking to know God, or to vnderstand his will, no not so much as for their own vow in baptisme; although none will brag more of fidelitie vnto God, than these men do. I I. Those that haue knowledge and vnderstanding in Gods will, and yet make no conscience to liue accordingly. I I I. Those that for a time shew forth many good things, as care to get knowledge, and to keepe faith and a good conscience, but after suffer themselves to be intangled and drawne away with the profits and pleasures of the world, or els to bee driuen back by trials and persecution. And of these three sorts be most men generally: whose case is fearefull and dangerous, for they shall neuer haue the crowne of life, if they continue thus vnfaithfull.

To induce men to fidelitie, Christ ad-

deth a most forcible reason: promising therunto, *The crowne of eternal life*. Hence the Papists conclude, that Martyrs by suffering martyrdom, doe merite the kingdome of heauen; because it is called a crowne, therefore say they it is a reward. Wherunto I answere two waies:

I. The kingdome of heauen is called a crowne only in resemblance, because as with men after the race is run, they receiue the garland; euen so after men haue fought the good fight of faith, and kept good conscience in this life, then in the life to come they receiue the crowne of glorie. For the keeping of faith & good conscience is not the cause, but the antecedent of eternall life. Secondly, the reward is promised not to the martyrdom but to the martyr; and yet not for his sufferings, but because he is a member of Christ, and by suffering death hath shewed his faith in Christ; for whose merit alone he is so rewarded. And so must this and all other promises of like sort be vnderstood: for the Papists do foulely erre, when they apply the promises vnto the workes, which are made vnto the workers. By this promise, wee all that haue made our vow to God in baptisme, must learne to become faithful in keeping the same vnto the end. It is a shame for a man to be vnfaithfull vnto men, much more with God. And the more fearefull is this sinne, because only the faithfull shall inherite eternall life. Secondly, all such as haue made a shew of good things heretofore, and now doe suffer the same to decay, must call to minde from whence they are fallen, and become faithful keepers of the graces of God, holding fast true religion and good conscience, and walke constantly in obedience: and then shall they haue the crowne of life, though not for their deserts, but only for the merits of Christ.

Vers. 11. *Let him that hath an eare heare what the Spirit saith vnto the Churches: he that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.*

These words containe the last part of this Epistle: namely, the Conclusion. Wherein obserue generally, as also in the two next verses, that Christ repeateth the same things which he spake before

for in this and the former chapter, yea, in the very same words. This must be considered, because it is done by Christ, who is the doctor of his church; whose example both for matter and manner of teaching must be our rule and precept. The like did the Apostles: *As I cried not Paul to write the same things*, Phil. 3. 1. And Peter faith vnto the dispersed church, *(a) That hee will often put them in mind of the same things before his departing, wherein they had knowledge and were established*. Hereby all the ministers of the gospel in their ministerie haue warrant, often to teach and repeat the same points of doctrine, even in the same words. Yea, Gods faithfull Minister may preach the same Sermon oftentimes, if hee do it not for ease to himselfe, but for the benefit of the people. And therefore if any hearer of Gods word shall at any time marke the minister to deliuer the same things often; he is not curiously to find fault with his ministerie, for by that reason they may find fault with Christ; who seven times repeateth the same things vnto these churches.

This Conclusion hath two parts: a Commandement, and a Promise: The words of this commandement haue bene expounded in the seventh verse, with the doctrines and vses thereof: yet here is to be obserued what the spirit commandeth thus seriously to our hearing. The things are three, which were handled in the former verses. First, touching Gods providence, that hee seeth and regardeth the tribulations of his church. The second, touching triall: that Gods church and people ought beforehand to consider of the day of visitation, and thereby arme themselves with courage against all afflictions, that they suffer not themselves to be ouermuch daunted with any feare. The third touching faithfulness: Gods people must consider what promises they haue made to God in baptism, namely, to keepe faith, true religion, and good conscience vnto the end; and these they must performe vnto death. These things being so carefully commended vnto vs by Christ, we must labour to haue them engrauen in our hearts, that wee may practise them in our liues. And to incite vs herevnto, we must marke the two reasons contained in the

words. First, *because the spirit of Christ speaketh vnto vs*. Secondly, *because they concerne all churches*, (though principally they were spoken to the church of Smyrna) and therefore none may seeke excuse to exempt himselfe from learning and obeying these things.

The Promise, *He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*. Of the meanes of overcoming, wee haue spoken in the seventh verse. By second death is meant the condemnation of the soule and bodie for euer and euer. For there be two kinds of death mentioned in Scripture: The first is the separation of bodie and soule asunder at the end of this life: The second is, when soule and bodie both are seuered for euer from Gods comfortable presence, *Rev. 2. 8*. This second death is expounded to be *an abode in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone*. The meaning therefore of the promise is this; that they which overcome, though they may suffer the first death, yet they shall neuer suffer damnation: their soule and body may be seuered one from the other for a time, but neither soule nor body shall euer be seuered from God, to go into that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Which is a most gracious and happy promise.

Here first inarke to whom this promise is made, namely, *To them that overcome*. Where learne, that it is not sufficient for a man to professe and approoue, or to teach the doctrine of the Gospel: but withall he must ioyne a fight against himselfe, against sinne, the world, the deuil, and against all the enemies of his saluation, and not suffer them to reigne ouer him, but so fight, as by Gods grace hee may overcome; and then shall the second death neuer hurt him. It is nothing to professe, if we still liue in sinne: and therefore wee must not content our selves with knowledge, but labour to feele in our hearts such power of grace, as will make vs truly to say we are conquerours ouer our spirituall enemies. This is that blessed state of all those, vnto whome life everlasting belongeth, who shall neuer taste of the second death.

Secondly, here is answered a great question, which euery mans conscience will moue vnto him; namely, *How may I*

L scape

scape the second death, that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. *Thou* must in this life truly turne vnto God from all thine euill wayes, renounce thy selfe, and put all thine affiance in Christ his death and passion; and euen more labour to keepe true religion, faith, and good conscience vnto death in all estates. This doe, and though thou tast of the first, yet the second death shall neuer touch thee.

Thirdly, hereby Christ giueth vs to vnderstand, that of the two deaths the second is the worse. The bodily death is terrible vnto nature; but the second is the proper death indeed, the destruction of the creature in soule and body eternally. And yet behold the madnesse of man, who feareth greatly the first death, and regardeth nothing the burning lake, like vnto little children that feare their owne shadowes, and yet are not afraid of fire and water, that will burne and drowne them. This is mans miserable estate, through the blindnesse of his mind, and the hardnesse of his heart.

Verse 12. And to the Angell of the Church which is in Pergamus write. This saith he, that hath the sharpe sword with two edges.

Here is the third particular commendement which Christ gaue to *Iohn*, when of wee haue spoken before in the first verse: shewing there what is meant by Angell; and why this particular commendement was giuen vnto *Iohn*. This third Epistle of Christ, as the former, hath three parts: a Preface in this verse: The proposition of the Epistle, ver. 14. and so forward vnto the 17. And the Conclusion in the 17. verse.

I part. The Preface sheweth in whose name this Epistle is written; namely, in Christ's name: The causes wherof wee haue shewed before in the first verse. Christ is here set forth by an action of his kingly office, borrowed from the former Chapter, verse 16. *These things saith he that hath the sharpe two edged sword:* that is, Hee who is not onely Priest and Prophet of his church, but the king thereof, to guide and gouerne the same. The sword which hee hath in his hand, or in his mouth (as *I* say saith) is that two edged

ged sword; yea that sharpe two edged sword: whereby is signified the whole word of God; the Law and Gospell: which is so called, by reason of the operation thereof, as it is Hebrewes the 4. *Christ* is thus described to comfort this Church of Pergamus. For hereby three things are signified: First his wonderful power in slaying original sinne and corruption by his word, in all them that beleue in him: so as there is no hope of recouerie for sinne, after it is once wounded. Secondly, that hee will strengthen and preserve his Church, and all the true members thereof, by the same word against all their enemies. This is doct after this manner: The whole word of God, both law and gospell, must both bee knowne, and beleued; then whensoever any temptation commeth, faith maketh the same word powerfull in vs, to repell the temptation; and to strengthen vs in affliction: for it is that sword of the spirit, whereby wee wound all our enemies.

But if it bee not beleued, it is but as a sword in a sheath; and will nothing helpe vs. Thirdly, hereby he signifieth that hee destroyeth all their enemies: this is the chiefe end why hee so describeth himselfe in this place.

How Christ woundeth his enemies herewith, wee haue showed in the former Chapter, and the sixteenth verse, with the vses thereof.

Verse 13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, where Sabai is one day, and thou keepst my name, and hast not denyed my faith, euen in those dayes when Antipas my faithfull Martyr was slaine among you, where Sabai dwelleth.

Here beginneth the second part of this Epistle; to wit, the Proposition: which containeth two parts. A commendation of this Church, in this verse: and a Reproose, ver. 14. The commendation is twofold: First, generall, in these words: *I know thy works;* then speciall, in the words following, *I know where thou dwellest, &c.* Of the generall commendation wee haue spoken in the former Epistles; ver. 21 and 9. This

This yet must be obserued, that Christ herewith beginneth the matter of all his Epistles: intending no doubt, hereby to settle the perswasion of his presence deeply in every one of our hearts: for it is indeed the ground of the holy feare of God, which is the beginning of all true religion and godlinesse. And here Christ giueth a president for his ministers: namely, that the first thing they must teach their people, is to be perswaded of this presence of Christ; wherefoever they are Christ is with them, and whatsoeuer they doe he seeth them. This will cause them make conscience of all their wayes, and it is impossible that any should euer haue sound knowledge or good conscience, till he be perswaded hereof. *Abraham* knew well that in *Abimelechs* court they would make no conscience of murder, because *they* (a) *wanted this feare of God*: to feare God and keepe his commandements is the whole man: and therefore wee should giue all diligence hereunto. It is indeed a hard lesson for vs to learne, and of our selues wee cannot learne it: but if we vse the meanes, Gods blessing will be vpon our endeouour, and then shall wee haue knowledge vpon knowledge, and grace vpon grace, with the comfort of a good conscience.

The particular commendation of this church is, for her constancie in maintaining the doctrine of the Gospel, in these words, *I know where thou dwellest, euen in a place where Sathans throne is, and yet for all that thou keepest my name*: that is, thou holdest still my true religion and doctrine. The throne of Sathan is any place where superstition, idolatrie, or profanenesse is maintained without controlment, and from whence wickednesse is conueied to other places. For the diuell is the God of the world, & he hath his thrones among men. Pergamus was a great citie of the Gentiles which maintained idolatrie, & persecuted the gospel, from whence also iniquitie was deuied to other townes and places: therefore it is called the diuels throne.

Herein we may obserue sundry points of great importance. First, the exceeding policie of Sathan: he hath his kingdome in this world: and for the establishing thereof, he must haue his thrones where wickednesse and idolatrie is maintained

without controlment, and whence sinne is deuied to other places. In all ages it hath bene thus, and will continue so to the end. In the old world hee had his thrones among *Cains* posteritie: in the church of the Iewes, euen in the daies of the kings of Israel, the high places and groues, where the people sacrificed to their idols, were the diuels thrones: the oracles of the gentiles where the diuels gaue answer vnto men, were his cheefe thrones: in the dayes of poperie, euerie church and chappell were thrones of Sathan, wherein were erected images & holy roods for the worship of Saints; whither the people came to worship from country to country. In most schools of learning for many hundred yeres the diuell had his thrones; For therein was nothing taught but errors, heresies, and most abhominable Idolatries. In these our dayes the diuell hath his thrones among vs, where any wizzard dwelleth, or cunning person (as they are called) for thither whole countries doe flocke for helpe and for counsell, and so yeeld homage to Sathan. All dicing, and all brothell houses, wherein abhominable wickednesse is freely committed, are Sathans thrones. Yea all those families are the diuels thrones, where men liue without loue or practise of religion, in blindness and ignorance, in blasphemie, drunkennesse, whoredome, iniustice, or any such impieties. And in reason it must needs be thus, for the diuell being a prince of this world, will haue his throne in some parts thereof.

Hereby wee see it is most needfull in euerie Christian kingdome, there should be thrones of iustice in ciuill courts, for the maintenance of equity, the reward of vertue, and for the repressing of iniustice and iniquitie. And also thrones of Ecclesiasticall iurisdiction for the reprehending and punishing of all those finnes which the ciuill court reacheth not vnto. And it is necessarie that in these thrones iustice should bee administred without partialitie, that Gods throne may be erected, which is opposit to the throne of Sathan.

Againe, the diuels cunning appears notably in the choise of the place where he setteth vp his throne: it was no petty towne or village, but a cheefe and fa-

mous citie, which had bene the seate of many kings. This hath bene his practise in all ages, to chuse the chiefest places for the seate of his throne. Great Babylon in Scripture is called, *A citie of iniquitie*; that is, a throne of the diuell. And Rome that was once a famous church, is now, and hath bene long that spirituall Babylon, the throne of the diuell. Yea, in Ierusalem the city of the great king, had the diuell got vp his throne, when Christ called the temple a den of theecues. And in our dayes the people of great towns and cities are generally more backward in embracing the gospell, than in little villages. The cause hereof is, the malice of the diuell, who will haue his throne in chiefest places, for the greater hindrance of religion: there he much prevaileth by choaking the word with pride, profit, and pleasures, causing them to content themselves with a forme of godlinesse, when as they want the power thereof. And thus he dealeth in greater townes, that thence impietie may bee deriued to the countrey round about, as tradesmen do their wares from place to place. And therefore the people of great townes especially, must labour not onely to know the gospell, but to beleue and obey the same. Every man must reforme himselfe, and euery familie themselves, that Gods throne may bee established, and the diuels throne battered downe among them.

Secondly, whereas this church dwelleth where the diuels throne is, wee may obserue, whence the church of God is gathered, namely, out of Sathans kingdom. Gods church is a company of men ordained to saluation: taken from vnder the power of the diuell: though after their calling they be Gods peculiar flocke, yet they are by nature the children of wrath. Thus Paul speaketh of all the Gentiles, Act. 26. 18. And particularly of the church of Colossa, Colos. 1. 13. *That God deliuered them from the power of darknesse, & translated them into the kingdom of his deare sonne.*

The 7th.

Hence we learne. I. That no man is to stand vpon his gentilitie, or glory in his parentage for nobilitie and great bloud, but onely reioice in this, that he is drawn out of the kingdom of darknesse, and from vnder the power of Sathan, and

placed by Christ Iesus in the kingdom of grace. For what will it profit a man to weare about his necke a chaine of gold, if so be his heart, will, and affections, be chained to the diuels service? and what availeth it princes to sit vpon their stately thrones, if they themselves be in subiection vnto Sathan, and do homage vnto his throne? yea, what will all the treasures, honours, and pleasures of the world auail to him that is debarred from the riches of Gods loue in Christ, and destitute of the treasures of his grace, and so led captiue by Sathan at his will and pleasure? Secondly, some do thinke that a man may be saued by any religion, the Jew by his religion, the Turke by his, the Papist by his, &c. Yea, it is the common receiued opinion of our ignorant people, that euerie one shall be saued by his good meaning. But all these are meere dotages of mens brayne: for a man may hold his good meaning, and yet serue the diuell at his throne. It is not sufficient to hold this or that religion, or to practise ciuill vertues, as iustice, temperance, &c. vnlesse a man bee one of Gods Church, secured from the company of them that serue Sathan. Thirdly, here all Gods seruants haue a notable meanes of stay and comfort in afflictions. If they bee persecuted, and cast into most darke dungeons for the name of Christ, they must call to mind, that they are taken out of the diuels prison in the kingdom of darknesse, and placed in the glorious kingdom of Iesus Christ, and made members of his church and shall bee inheritours of his glorie. Fourthly, hence we learne, that the preaching of the gospel hath in it a diuine power: no creatures, except the good Angels, haue power comparable to the diuels: and yet the preaching of the gospell is stronger than all the power of Sathan, for it gathereth a Church where the diuell hath his throne, it deliuers men from vnder the power of Sathan, and placeth them in the glorious libertie of the sonnes of God: although therefore it bee preached by sinfull man, yet it must bee reuerenced as the power of God, and his owne arme to saue his elect. Fifthly, hence wee gather that God will haue his people to dwell with wicked and vngodly men: for the church of

Perga-

Pergamus dwelleth where Sathans throne is. This hee doth for good causes: I. That their faith, obedience, and repentance might be exercised, and they preserved from many sins which otherwise they should fall into. *Moses* telleth the Israelites, that the Cananites must not be all cast out at their first entrance, but dwell among them, lest wild beasts did grow vp which would deuour them: and so the wicked must dwell among the godly to exercise Gods graces in them, lest they fall into sinne and securitie. 11. That they might shine forth as lights vnto the wicked by their godly conversation, Phil. 2. 15. *That ye may be blamelesse and pure, the sonnes of God without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation and among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.* And thus the godly must do, that by their vblameable life, others might bee wonne to the faith; for godly example is a notable meanes to draw men to loue and embrace faith and true religion, 1. Pet.

3. 1. III. That God may shew on the godly tokens of his speciall loue and fauour: which hee doth when he sendeth iudgements vpon the wicked, and spareth his children. Hence it was, that when the Lord would bring a common iudgement vpon the Iewes, hee causeth those that mourned for their owne sinnes, and for the abominations of the people, (a)

(a) Exe. 9. 4.

To be marked in the forehead, that they might be spared. So that if any godly person dwelle among such as hate religion, and be prophane, he must content himselfe, knowing it is Gods will his church should be vexed and troubled by the societies of the wicked and vngodly. Sixtly, hence it appeareth that Gods people may lawfully dwell among wicked and vngodly men, alwayes remembering that they communicate not with them in their sinnes and rebellions against God: For so Lot dwelt in Sodome, and this church of Pergamus where the duell had his throne, 1. Cor. 7. 2. This question is answered: a maister is a heathen man, and his seruant is conuerted to the faith; whereupon he thinketh that hee is free from seruing his maister: but *Paul* telleth him hee must doe externall seruice still, so farre forth as he keepe good conscience, and be not constrained to renounce

true religion. Lastly, hence wee haue direction to answer a question much urged against vs by the Papists, to wit, Where our church was fourscore yeres ago, when *Luther* first began to preach: they intend hereby to prooue our church to be but of fourscore yeres continuance, and so our religion to be new. Wee answer by the like, Where was the church of Pergamus, when the duell throne was in that citie? Surely it was there where the duell had his throne. And so when Antichrist that man of sin, had spread poperie ouer al Europe, at that very same time was Gods church in Europe where poperie was professed, mingled with the Papists: which to be thus appeareth by this, that in al ages there haue bene some, who openly haue oppugned poperie, more or lesse, partly by writing, & partly by speaking, as the records of all ages do testifie and make manifest: so that though iniquitie had the vpper hand, yet our church had his being in the midst of poperie.

And thou keepest my name: That is, though thou dwell in a place where the duell hath his throne, yet thou holdest fast my name, so as neither force nor fraud of the aduersary can take my name from thee: so much the words import. By *Christ*'s name we must vnderstand the doctrine of the gospel: so *Paul* is said to be (b) *A chosen vessel to carrie Christ's name among the Gentiles:* That is, to publish among them the doctrine of the Gospel.

(b) Act. 9. 15.

Here this church of Pergamus is particularly commended for her constancy, in holding fast true religion against all aduersarie power whatsoeuer. Hence we learne that it is not sufficient to teach, or know and beleue the doctrine of the gospel in time of peace: but we must be constant in holding it fast against all gainesayers, and not be turned about with every wind of doctrine, but in life and death keepe sure the truth, that neither fraud nor force of any aduersarie power draw it from vs, or vs from it. *Mat. 13: The kingdom of heauen is compared to a treasure hid in the field, which when a man findeth he goeth and selleth all he hath to buy the field.* The scope of that parable is this. If any man should come into any of our fields, and by searching find a gold mine, hee would not make it knowne to any, but

cover it close, and go his way and sell all that he had to buy that field, that thereby he might enrich himselfe: even so having found this, that the gospel revealeth the way to life everlasting, though wee must not conceale the same from others, yet we must be like this man herein, that we could be content to part with all that we have, that so we might make the Gospel ours. 1. Tim. 3. 9. Deacons must have this propertie, *To have the ministerie of faith in a pure conscience.* There a good conscience is compared to a sure treasure house, which cannot be robbed by any adversaries power: and faith, that is, true religion is the treasure that is there safely layd vp: such a store-house must wee get for the preferuation of the faith. Any thing els we may lose, but if we part with true religion, saluation is gone and all is lost. And therefore in life and death we must keepe fast faith.

Further, Christ amplifieth the praise of their constancie by two arguments: First, that they held Christs name without deniall: Secondly, that they kept the faith in the time of bloody persecution. For the first in these words, *And hast not denied my faith.* This is an excellent commendation; for many will hold the doctrine of the gospel for a time, & yet after deny the same by apostasie: but this church held fast true religion, without any reuel at all. Their practise must wee follow: and so hold fast true religion, that therein we neuer make reuolt: for if we shall once deny religion, wee know not whether God will give vs the grace of repentance, that wee may professe it againe; which if he do not, wee perish eternally. Consider *Esaus* example, who sold his birth right for a messe of red broth, and after lost the blessing, which when hee would haue recovered hee was reiected:

(*) He. 12. 17

(a) *and found no place to repentance, though he sought it with teares.* Therefore to prevent the fearefull danger of not repenting after reuolt, wee must still hold fast true religion without deniall.

Here in this place *the faith of Christ*, is all one with *Christs name*, that is, with the true doctrine of the gospel. And it is called Christs faith: first, because Christ with the father and the spirit, is the author thereof: Secondly, because Christ revealeth the same from the bosome of

his father: for God revealeth his Gospel vnto men by his son Christ Iesus: Thirdly, because Christ is the substance and matter of the gospel: for indeed Christ Iesus is the principal subiect of the whole Bible, being the end of the law, and the substance of the gospel.

The second argument of their praise for constancie, is taken from the circumstance of time; they held fast true religion in the time of bloody persecution: *Even in these dayes* (saith Christ) *when Antipas my faithfull martyr was slaine among you where Sathan dwelleth.* Who this *Antipas* was, is not knowne, neither certainly recorded in any historie: it is thought hee was the minister of this church, who opposed himselfe against idolatry and gentilisme in this cite of Pergamus.

In this argument note two points. I. That Christ commends *Antipas*, calling him his faithfull martyr. Whereby wee see, that in Gods church it is lawful to honour saints and martyrs. For that which Christ doth, his church may doe. This their honor must stand in two things, In due deserved praise & commendation, & in a carefull imitation of their good vertues & godly liues: and for this end doth Christ commend *Antipas* vnto this church, that they might follow his good conuersation: but as for popish honor of inuocation & adoration, it hath no ground in Gods word. Againe, in calling him faithfull martyr, hee commendeth more the cause of his death, than the death; to shew that the cause maketh a martyr, not the death: For an heretick may be put to death for his damnable opinions. Therefore *Antipas* is a martyr, not because hee was slaine, but because he was faithfull vnto death for the maintenance of Christs true religion.

II. point. In the end of the verse Christ sheweth who were the authors of *Antipas* his death; namely, such among them in whom Sathan ruled: for he was slaine (saith Christ) *among you, where Sathan dwelleth.* Which words he repeateth, to give vs to vnderstand, that all persecutors let them carry what face they will, are in truth such, in whome the diuell ruleth, where he hath his hold, & keeps possession. *Quest.* Why did Sathan more dwell there than in other places? *Ans.* Because many in this place were Gentiles, who contemned

contemned and mocked the gospel, and maintained idolatry, whereby they became the holds of Sathan. And by proportion we may gather, that all contemners of religion, & all that walke in their owne wicked wayes, are indeed the stables and holds of the diuell, though they should be the temples of the holy ghost. And so many families as there are, where religion is mocked, Gods name blasphemed, iniustice and impietie practised; so many holds of Sathan there are where the diuell ruleth: and such they continue till they reforme themselves of their impieties, and embrace the gospel sincerely. And therefore all masters of families especially should loue the gospel, and see that in their families religion bee taught, embraced, and obeyed, that so the diuell may haue no hold in their families. *Que.* Whether might not *Antipas*, being Pastor of this church, haue fled for the safetie of his life? *Ans.* There be two kinds of persecution, one that is directly intended against the Pastor principally: the other against the whole church equally. In the persecution directed against the Pastor, this must be considered, Whether God gaue him oportunitie and libertie to flie, or not: if God gaue him libertie and oportunitie, hee may flie, and the Church is to assist him, and to vse means for his preservation: but if God deny him means to escape, then he must iudge himselfe to be called of God, to suffer death for his name; and so hee may not flie. And such was the cause of *Antipas* in this Church. But if the persecution bee directed against the whole church equally, then the Pastor may not flie, but take part in their sufferings, that hee may bee a meane to stay and comfort his brethren.

Verse 14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them that maintain the doctrine of Balaam; which taught Balac to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, that they should eat of things sacrificed unto Idols, and commit fornication.

Here followeth the reproofe of this Church of Pergamus, which is first generally propounded in these words, I have a few things against thee: Secondly, in

particular, for want of zeale, in suffering among them such as maintained the doctrine of Balaam. Thirdly, hee setteth downe a reason or confirmation thereof in the end of the 14. verse, and in the 15.

The generall reproofe is the same which was giuen out against the Church of Ephesus, vers. 4. Whereby hee would teach vs a speciall dutie: namely, that every man must seriously consider with himselfe what sinnes hee hath in him, which Christ may haue to lay vnto his charge. For this very cause doth Christ rehearse it vnto this Church. And therefore wee must call our selues to reckoning, and examine our selues not by our owne wits, but by the rule of Gods word, and search out all our thoughts, words, and actions; and see how many things Christ may haue against vs, that so making a forehand reckoning, and seeking to be cleared by true repentance we may not bee condemned for them at the last day: for if wee would iudge our selues, we should not be iudged. This is a necessarie dutie, and the practise of it is the ground of all grace, and conscionable obedience: as on the other side, the want hereof is the cause why many that liue in the church doe perish eternally. For a day of accounts will come, wherein wee shall neuer escape, vnlesse by a forehand, reckoning in the practise of true repentance from dead workes, and by faith in Christ Iesus wee preuent the same. Lamentable and fearefull is the state of all those, that neuer call themselves to this account: it causeth them to go on in sinne without remorse, *Hos. 7.2.* Hereof *Jeremie* complained, (a) *That no man said what haue I done.* And for that cause hee denounceth fearefull iudgements against the people. This was the sinne of the old world: (b) *men knew no*

thing till the flood came and destroyed them all. This securitie bringeth mens souls to hell, before they wot where they are: And therefore *David* crieth out, *Psal. 50. vers. 22. Ob consider this* (meaning the account that God will take with them) *lest God seare them in peace, & there bee none to deliuer them.* The end of preaching and hearing Gods word, is to bring the soule to eternall life & saluation: but the want of this account maketh the holy ordinance of God to bee of none effect to many

(a) *Ier. 2. 22.*

(b) *Mat. 24.*

many a one. For how should men embrace with comfort the word of reconciliation, till they feele in themselves their enmity with God, and desert of condemnation.

II. point. *Because thou hast them that maintaine the doctrine of Balaam, &c.* Here is the particular reproofe of this church for want of zeale, in that they entertayned and suffered hereticall Ministers to liue among them which maintained the doctrine of *Balaam*. This shewed, that though they loued the gospel, and embraced it, yet it was very coldly, and without that feruent zeale which they ought to haue shewed against such hereticks.

The Vse.

Here first Christ teacheth this church to shew forth zeale in excommunicating & casting out such heretikes as by damnable doctrine did trouble them. This place is a sufficient ground for the practise of that Ecclesiasticall censure. When men hold hereticall opinions, the church after two or three admonitions is to excommunicate them and cast them out. So did Paul to *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* 1. Tim. 1. 20. Secondly, Christ reproofing this Church for entertaining such heretickes and wicked men, doth giue vs to vnderstand, that every member of Gods church should haue a great dislike of all persons, that hold not the doctrine of Christ in truth, but maintaine errors against the tenour of Scripture, and the profession of the Church. For this cause Paul chargeth *Timothie* to (a) *separate himselfe from such as teach otherwise than hee had giuen direction, and consent not vnto the wholesome words of our Lord Iesus Christ, & to the doctrine which is according to godlines: being puffed up and knowing nothing.* This then must bee our carefull practise: wee haue by Gods mercy true religion among vs, which we must maintaine with zeale: and if any bring in other doctrine we must reiect it, and shew forth detestation to him that bringeth it, not bidding him God speed, 2. Ioh. 10. Wee must rather loofe our liues, than suffer the truth of God to be defaced. Thirdly, that which Christ laieth to the charge of this church, may in sundry respects bee charged vpon our churches & congregations at this day; namely, *want of zeale against sin, and severity against sinners*: for though

the gouernours of our Church repell the heresies of Poperie, Anabaptists, and familie of Loue, and suppress all doctrines that raze the foundation, which are commendable things; yet in the midst of our congregations be abundance of Atheists, who by deed & conuersation deny Christ Iesus: for many know nothing in the matters of religion, and moe bee profane, who both thinke and speake most basely of religion, and of the teachers and professours thereof. Yea, wee haue flat epicures permitted to liue in our church, such as make their belly their God: who giue themselves wholly vnto eating, drinking, sports, and delights, without all regard either of the generall duties of Christianitie, or of the particular duties of their calling. Wee haue also among vs many cruell and mercilesse persons, that in their affaires abound in the practises of fraud, wrong, vsurie, and oppression, (a) *whose treading is vpon the poore* in the pride of their couetousnesse, whereby also they eat the flesh of Gods people, & slea off their skin from them, & breake their bones, and chop them in peeces as for the pot, & as flesh within the cauldron, Mich. 3. 6. And yet all these, because they submit themselves to the euil authority, are permitted without controlment to be partakers of the priuiledges of Gods church, euen to the receiuing of the seals of Gods covenant, being themselves flat enemies to the grace of God. Yea, many of these are greatly countenanced and graced for wisdom and reputation; when as such as feare God, and make conscience of their wayes, are counted vile. All which, as it argueth exceeding want of zeale in severity against sinne: so it cannot chuse but prouoke the Lord to come against vs in iudgement, as hee did against this Church. The meanes whereby this euill is to bee reformed, doth follow afterward.

(a) Amos 5. 21.

(a) 1. Tim. 6. 3 & 4.

III. point. The reason or confirmation of the former reproofe, whereby the Lord would moue this Church to detest these false teachers, is taken from the effect of their doctrine; and it is layed downe in this similitude. As *Balaam* the false prophet taught *Balaam* to put a stumbling blocke before the children of Israel, to cause them to eat of things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication:

on:

on: so this Church maintained among them Nicholaitans, who taught, it was lawfull to eat things sacrificed to Idols, at Idols feasts, and to commit fornication. The first part of this similitude is in the end of this 14. verse: *Which taughts Balac to put a stumbling block, &c.* The second part is in the 15. verse.

Touching the doctrine of *Balaam* we are to obserue three points: First, What a stumbling block, or an offence is. Secondly, what it is to cast or put a stumbling block. Thirdly, by what meanes king *Balac* did cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel. For the first, a stumbling block is properly any thing, as wood, or stone, or such like, that is cast in a mans way, to hinder him in his gate, and to cause him to trip or fall: And by resemblance in this place, an offence is any thing that causeth a man to sinne against God, and so to slip or fall, or to go out of his way that leadeth to life. Further, an offence is twofold; either giuen, or taken. An offence giuen, is any speech or deed, whereby a man is prouoked to sinne: and so was *Peter* an offence vnto Christ, though he tooke it not, *Mat. 16. 23.* An offence taken, is when any man taketh occasion to fall and sinne, by that which is well done by others: so were the Pharisees offended at the sacred preaching of our Sauour Christ. II. point. The casting or putting of a stumbling block, or giuing an offence, is the doing or saying of any thing, whereby a man is occasioned to sinne: and this is done, either about things euil in themselves, or in things indifferent. Things euil are such as Gods word forbiddeth: and they are twofold, either persuasions, or examples. Bad persuasions are false doctrine, and euill counsell. Bad example is also a giuing of offence, because it doth embolden euill men in their sinne, and draw the godly to euill. Againe, in things indifferent, as meat, drinke, apparrell, &c. may offence be giuen, when as they are vsed vnseasonably, not in fit time and place, and before fit persons. And of this *Paul* speaketh, saying: *If I know my eating did offend my brother, I would not eat flesh while the world standeth.* The offence here spoken of, was an offence giuen in euill things, for it was an euill act done by *Balaam*, and accordingly receiued & taken

of the Israelites, for he vsed outward prouocations to allure them vnto sinne. III. point. The meanes whereby king *Balac* did cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, is set downe in the end of the verse, *by prouoking them to eate of things sacrificed to Idols, & to commit fornication.* That we may vnderstand this fully read *Numb. 25.* The summe of the historie is this: When *Balaam* had assaiied sundry wayes to curse the children of Israel & could not, he gaue *Balac* counsell to vse means to cause them to sin. At his counsell *Balac* sent forth the most beautifull women in his kingdome into the campe of Israel, to entice them to the seruice of their Idols, and to banquet with them at their Idol feasts, that so they might draw them to fornication: whereunto the Israelites condescended, and so sinned against God. Thus much of the meaning of the words.

First, here obserue a speciall propertie of false teachers: namely, to cast offences before men, to cause them to fall in the way that leadeth to saluation. By this Christ intendeth to make knowne vnto this Church the false doctrine of *Balaam*. *Paul* in his Epistles (a) calleth the doctrine of the gospel *a truth according to godlinesse*: because the intent of the gospel is, to lead men to true godlinesse. On the contrary, the doctrine of Antichrist is called (b) *the mystery of iniquitie*; because the scope thereof is, to draw men to all iniquitie and abomination. Here then wee haue a rule, whereby wee may iudge betwene true doctrine and false, even by looking into the end and scope thereof: if it ayme at true pietie and sincere obedience, wee may iudge it to be good; but if it tend to draw men to idolatrie and sin, then it is a false doctrine. Thus wee might scan all false religions, as the religion of the Turke and Iew at this day. But because wee are more troubled with the doctrine of Poperie among our common people, who call it *The old Religion*, therefore let vs a little examine the same by this rule.

The end of Poperie is to pull downe the kingdome of Christ, and to disanull his lawes; as wil appeare by a short view in euerie commandement: and therefore it cannot bee the true religion. The first commandement teacheth vs, *To chuse and acknowledge*

The Psal.

(a) 1. Tim. 2. 3.
Tit. 1. 1.

(b) 1. The 1. 2.

acknowledge the true God for our God alone.

But the Church of Rome teacheth to make more gods than one, and to acknowledge the creature to be God: for by their doctrine men are to pray vnto Saints, whereby they make them gods, in giuing this diuine proprietie vnto them to know the heart. Their doctrine also ascribeth vnto Saints, *power to moue*; which is a proprietie of God: for none can merit but he that is God. The humane nature of Christ could not haue merited any thing, vnlesse it had bene ioyned to the godhead. Yea, they make the wood of the crosse to be god, for in their masse booke at this day they call (not Christ crucified on the crosse) but the very crosse it selfe, *our only hope*: yea, the virgine Mary, who is but a creature, they place as queene in heauen, giuing her power ouer Christ to command him in the matter of saluation, and so they disanull the first commandment. The second commandment they reuoke, in teaching it to be lawfull to make images of the Trinitie, according as they shewed themselves in the old and new Testament: the father like an old man, the son as he liued, and the holy ghost like a dove; and therein to worship them. Againe, they teach that men may adore the Images of Saints, which is flat against that commaundment. The third commaundment they disanull, in teaching it to bee lawfull to sweare by Saints, and not by God only. The fourth they disanull, by making the feastiuall dayes of Saints equall with the Lords Saboath, and to be kept holy vnto God as solemnly as the Lords day. Whereby also they take away the liberty of the church in the lawfull vse of the fixe dayes, for honest labor in a mans calling. The fift they disanull in giuing freedom and immunitie to their clergie from subiection to ciuile authoritie: and in dispensing with subiects, for their loyalty & allegiance to their lawfull princes: and with children & seruants from yeelding due helpe, seruice, and obedience, to their parents and masters. The sixt, by their houses of refuge which they call *Sanctuaries*, wherein murderers may be in safetie; and by maintaining ignorance in religion, through which they murder many a simple soule. The seuenth, by tollcrating of strewes, and allowing of uice: for by

their law it is lawfull for the great vncke to marrie his neece, descending from his brother or sister, so it bee without the fourth degree, which is against nature. The eight, by making sale of all things, of heauen, hell, of earth, of pardons, & deliuering men from purgatorie: which is flat robbetrie, and most grosse deceit and couenage. The ninth they disanull, by falsifying the canon of scripture, for they make that canonically which is no Scripture: and besides in their doctrine practisall they defend a lye, for when a man hath confessed his finnes to the priest, if the magistrat aske the priest what finnes the man confessed, they teach the priest to say, *I know not*, that is (say they) *to tell to thee*: which is a flat lye. And whereas they would defend this by an exposition of Christs words, when he sayth: *(a) The day of iudgement is not knowne to the Sonne of man*: that is (say they) *to reueale it vnto others*; they do but deceive the simple by an expolition which is not fit. The last commandment they disanull, by holding concupiscence before consent to be no sinne, when as wee know by Gods word, that the first euill motions in vs be finnes. So that hereby wee may see, that Poperie is but a false religion, though it haue falsely among our common people the name of *The old Religion*, and therefore wee must abhorre the same, as vngodly.

Now, whereas some doe charge the doctrine of our Religion to bee sundry wayes scandalous, they may be easily answered: First they say, it is a doctrine of desperation, because it imports, that God created men so, as he will saue but a few, making them for this end, to cast the greatest number to hel. To this I answer two things: First, touching the number of them that are to be saued: of which little is sayd in Scripture, & therefore I will not say much: yet this may be auerred, The number of the elect in it selfe is *(b) a great company*, but being compared with them that shall be damned it is but smal. II. touching the end of mans creation, our doctrine is not, that God created men for this end, to cast them to hell: but this we teach, that God created all men to manifest his glory in them: in some, by their iust and deserved damnation for sinne. Wee teach not, that men

(a) Mat. 24.
Mark. 13. 32.

(b) Reu. 7. 9.

are

are otherwise condemned than for their finnes, and therefore he that is condemned hath his iust reward. *III. Charge.* They say farther, our doctrine is a doctrine of blasphemie, for that we teach God to have decreed the fall of man, and so make God the author of mans sinne. *Ans.* We teach indeed that God decreed Adams fall, but thence it followeth not that he is the author of mans sinne. For Gods will is twofold, general, and speciall. Gods general will is, to permit that which is evil, not simply, but because with Gods will hath some respect of good, and in this respect wee say God decreed Adams fall. Gods speciall will is his approving will, whereby he taketh pleasure and delight in that which is good: and in this regard God nilled Adams fall, and mans finnes. And yet in some respect hee may be said to will them. A magistrat though he take no comfort or delight in the death and execution of a malefactor, yet hee decreeth and appointeth it, and so may be said to will it. Even so God who out of darknes can bring light, permitteth euill because with him it hath some respect of good, and so may be said to will it. *III. Charge.* They say also that the doctrine of our church is a doctrine of securitie: because we teach that a man may be certaine of his saluation, and of perseverance in the faith vnto the end. *Ans.* This is not a doctrine of carnall securitie, because we do impute needfully the vse of meanes to them that would be certaine of their saluation, and perseuer vnto the end; as namely, deniall of themselves, & humbling themselves in continuall prayer, with hearing & meditating in the word of God, and receiuing the Sacraments for the increase of faith, and renewing of their repentance: All which will rather make a man fearefull and carefull than secure. For with these meanes, is certainty of saluation, both attained and preserved: so that our doctrine is not a doctrine of offences, but a true doctrine that beareth out the plain way that leadeth vnto life.

Secondly, Christ his detestation of this doctrine of *Balaams*, must admonish vs to be so careful of our behavior every way, that we give no offence vnto any, for if wee do, wee are *Balaams* scholars.

This is a point of speciall obseruation, wee must looke to our communication, that it be void of railing & bad speeches, and to our conversation that it be holy and blameable. In euery thing, wee must haue care, not to hinder others in the way of life. *Woe (a) bee to them* (saith Christ) *that imagine offences: for he will better than a balaam's son* (such as an asse can but turne about, as the word imports) *perverted about his necke, & that hee were cast into the sea.* The reason is, because when a man by any means giueth his brother offence, he doth as much as in him lieth, to plunge his brothers soule into the pit of destruction, and therefore we must fly off fetters as hell it selfe sayeth, rather on the contrary, wee must helpe our brethren forward in the way of saluation, and remove from them all stumbling blockes that cause them to fall. If this duty were practised, our church would abound with graces and godlines: but this duty is wanting, and hence it comes that we haue so small increase after reading Iacob in prayer, for example, and euill counsell doth quench the graces of the spirit in many hearts.

Thirdly, hereby wee must learne to haue speciall care against offences given by euill counsell, or bad examples: for if it be the property of a false prophet to least humbling of backs before others, then is it a dangerous thing to fall vpon them when they are laid before vs. While we live in this world we shall see many offences given: but we must take heed we take them not. And therefore Christ biddeth vs (b) *If thy foote offend thee, or thine hand, cut it off: for thine eye, pluck it out:* Teaching vs to forgo the dearest thing that can be vnto vs, if it would cause vs to sin against God. And to moue vs hereto, marke the Israelites example in the wilderness: while they kept a good conscience, and obserued the true worship of God, all *Balaams* curses were turned into blessings: but when they fell to idolatrie & fornication with the Moabitish women: then was Gods wrath kindled against them, and his plague seized vpon them. Even so if our church be carefull to keep it selfe to the true religion, which by Gods mercie we introy, and will haue care to keepe good conscience in becoming a penitent and obedient people

(a) Mat. 18. 6
2.

(b) Mat. 18. 8

people vnto god: then may *Balaam* curse, and all our enemies spit their venom, yet we shall be safe: But if we let go true religion and good conscience, and fall to sinne, then we must looke for Gods heauie iudgements to fall vpon vs. in his wrath, as they did vpon his owne people. Fourthly, when *Balaam* cursing would not preuaile, then did faire women, and banqueting draw them to idolatry and fornication. Hence we learne, that temptations on the right hand, that is, taken from profits, pleasures, and pleasures, are most dangerous, and soonest preuaile to draw men from God. The state of a christian is like a besieged citie, when a huge armie cannot sack it, the silver and gold will open the gates hereof: euen so, when aduersitie cannot make a man to forsake religion & good conscience, then by prosperitie, ease, and pleasure hath the diuell stolen away his heart. Those therefore that haue ease, pleasures, and outward blessings at will, are in a farre more dangerous case in respect of sinne than others; vnlesse God vouchsafe vnto them speciall grace to watch against these pleasing temptations. This made godly *Iob* (a) *To sanctifie his children euerie day when they feasted each other at their houses: lest arie one shen should haue blasphemed God in his heart. Because he knew the diuell by pleasures wold soonest winde himselfe into their hearts.* Lastly, note the order of these finnes: First, they are drawn to sit at idols feasts, and then to commit adulterie: where we see that these two finnes goe together, Spirituall adulterie, that is, idolatry; and bodily adulterie, one is the plague & punishment of the other, that people which giue themselves to idolatry, will God giue vp to bodily adulterie. As this was true in these *Israelites*, so is it to be seene among the *Turkes*, and with the *Papists* at this day, who maintaine fornication, in tollerating stewes, and further it much by their vow of single life, wherewith they bind the conscience, though the partie want the gift of continence.

Verse. 15. Euen so haue them that maintain the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Here followeth the second part of the

comparison, where Christ setteth downe two things: First, what the Nicolaitans were. Secondly, how hee was affected towards them. What they were is expressed in the first words, *Euen so*, which is a note of resemblance or comparison, having reference to the words going before. They may be thus described: The Nicolaitans were a sect in the church of *Pergamus*, that maintained two damnable opinions according to the doctrine of *Balaam*. I. That it was lawfull to eat things offered to idols in the honour of idols, sitting in the idols temple. II. that fornication was no sin; but that a man might lawfully commit it. It may seem strange, that in the daies of the Apostles there should be men, professing the name of Christ, and yet hold such damnable opinions: but the truth is hereby euident, that there were such in this Church. And that we do not conceiue a liking of their wicked opinions, let vs examine their reasons; whereupon they might seeme to be grounded.

For the eating of things sacrificed to idols, they would plead thus. I. From the doctrine of christian libertie, *Things indifferent may be lawfully used. Things offered to Idols are things indifferent, as meats, & drinks, & therefore may lawfully be used.* *Ans.* Meats & drinks, if they be considered in themselves, are things indifferent, and may lawfully be vsed; yea after they haue bene offered to idols, if they be sold in the market, they may be lawfully bought and eaten in priuat houses, if it be done without offence of the weake, as *Paul* teacheth at large, 1. Cor. 10. 25. 29. But if these meats be considered as they are offered to idols, & eaten in the idols temple in the honor of idols, they be vnlawfull. And yet the Nicolaitans held this to be lawfull.

II. *Reason.* An idoll is nothing, 1. Cor. 8. 4. and therefore we sinne not in eating meats offered vnto them. *Ans.* An idoll is nothing, that is, in nature subsisting; nothing created or ordained of God, it hath no proprietie of the godhead: but yet an Idoll is something in mans imagination, which giueth to it the honour of God, and reputeth it as God, making it a God vnto himselfe.

III. *Reason.* *Naaman* the Syrian (b) went into the temple of the God Rimmon, & there

(a) *Iob* 1. 5.

(b) 2. Ki. 5. 18

there kneeled downe: Euen so may christians go eat in idols temples? *Ans.* When *Naaman* went in thither, he did not kneel downe to the idoll, but to the king, performing a ciuill dutie vnto his Prince; who vsed to leane on *Naamans* shoulder and worship his false god. And though *Naaman* were present at Idol-worship and seruice, yet it was with protestation against it: for being cured of his leprosie, he promised to worship no god but the God of Israel: and thereupon he laded two mules with the earth of the land of Israel, in token of his publike profession of thankfulness to the true God for his cleansing. If these in Pergamus whome Christ disliketh, had gone as *Naaman* did into idoll temples, they had not sinned as they did. And at this day if men protest against the idolatry of the masse, they may enter into those congregations where masse is said: for this protestation is a flat condemning of their false worship.

The second opinion of these Nicolaitans was, That men might lawfully commit fornication. This opinion they would thus iustifie: First, from the practise of *Lot*, who *(b)* offered to the men of *Sodom* his daughters; when they called for the strangers that were come into his house. Which thing (say they) *Lot* would neuer haue done, if fornication had bene a sin?

Ans. It seemeth that *Lot* cannot be excused in that action, though his purpose was by a lesser euill to preuent a greater, but God hath plainly taught, *That no man may do the least euill, for the procuring of the greatest good that can be*, Rom. 3. 8.

II. Reason. The Lord (say they) commanded *Hosea*, to take a wife of fornication, and children of fornication, Hof. 1. 2. It is not therefore vnlawful? *Ans.* There be diuers interpretations of that place. Some say, that was only in vision, and not a fact done. Others say, it was in speech onely, because hee prophesied vnto the people that he himselfe was a man of fornication vnto them. These expositions may wel stand. Yet others hold that the Lord commanding him this, it was to be done, and was done indeed. And sundry circumstances seeme to prooue that it was a fact done, for the womans name is set down to be *(b)* *Gomer*, and her fathers name *Diablim*. Secondly, a thing in vision or in

speech onely, doth not so much preuaile with wicked people, as that which is done indeed. Thirdly, the aunient opinion of best diuines that liued neereft to the Apostles times, auouch it was a fact done. *Obiect.* But this maintaineth fornication, against good maners, and the expresse law of God. *Ans.* It were so indeed if the Prophet had done it on his owne head, but hee did it by Gods speciall appointment, who is Lord of his owne law, and may dispenfe with it at his pleasure. God in his law forbiddeth to kill, yet *Abraham* is commanded to kil his sonne: which if he had done he had not sinned, because hee had a speciall commandement for it, which a man must obey, though it bee against a morall precept. Againe, *Hosea* tooke a wife of fornication, not to maintaine lier in her sinne, but to make her a chaste woman. And whereas he was commanded also to take vnto him children of fornication: it must not be vnderstood of children begotten by him, but borne of her in fornication: As if he should say, Take a wife with her children which she brought forth in fornication. So that this place which way soeuer wee take it, doth nothing maintaine their wicked errors.

III. Reason. Acts 15. The Apostles charge the churches, *To abstaine from that which is strangled, from blood, and from fornication*: There (say they) fornication is reckoned among things indifferent, and therefore may be vsed lawfully. *Ans.* It is there reckoned among things indifferent: First, because it was so accounted of among the Gentiles: Secondly, because the Gentiles did jointly by these three things offend the churches of the Iewes. But hence it followeth not that it is indeed a thing indifferent.

II. point. The affection of Christ towards these men is noted in these words: *Which thing I hate*. This hatred must bee referred not to the persons of the Nicolaitans, but to their opinions, liues, and practises.

Hereby Christ would instruct vs in *Thes* sundry needfull duties. First, if wee will follow him, wee must hate all honour and approbation that may bee giuen to idols, bee it neuer so little. These Nicolaitans might say, they abhorred idols and worshipped them not, onely they

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went

(a) Gen. 19. 8.

N.B.

(b) Ver. 3.

Nota Bene.

went with their friends into their Temples, and sat down to eat meat before them; now even this dealing Christ hateth. Wherein hee doth notably condemn the practise of the Romish church, which say, they worship not idols, but the true God: and yet they doe that which Christ hateth; for they kneele downe before them, they adore them, & light candles vnto them, and offer vnto them many rich Jewels, and much sumptuous attire, which is a great deale more than the Nicolaitans did: And therefore they are much more to bee condemned, and their practise also hated of vs. Secondly, Christs hatred of the least honor of idols, doth affoord a speciall caveat to such men as giue themselves to a trauelling life; as into Italy, Spaine, and other idolatrous places: they should content themselves within the precincts of the church, and not proceed further without warrant of a special calling, wherby they may assure themselves of Gods gracious protection. For hereby they giue occasion to themselves to do that which Christ hateth; though they say they hate idolatry: For if a man escape to be present at their abominable seruice, yet he cannot auoid going to their Temples, where hee is to offer some gifts, or performe some ceremonie after the custome of the country; whereby hee shall giue some approbation at the least of their idolatrie: whereas hee ought to hate the least appearance therof, euen the garment spotted with the flesh. Thirdly, by this his affection Christ would teach vs to grow to an hatred of all familiar societie with idolaters: for though we may haue societie of concord with them, yet societie of amitie, which is a special liking betwene man & man, we must not maintaine with them.

Fourthly, Christ hateth not only their idolatry, but their fornication also. Hereby teaching vs to grow to a hatred of fornication; which the rather must bee detested, because (a) *the bodies of euery man and woman be not their owne, but Christs*: & therefore ought not to bee inploied in the honour or seruice of the diuell, but of Christ: Againe, the bodies of euery christian man and woman are the members of Christ, now it is an vnseemly thing, to take the member of Christ, and make it the member of an harlot, Thirdly, their

bodies are temples, and dwelling places; not for earthly Princes, but for the holy Ghost: and therefore must be furnished with Gods graces, & adorned with chastitie & other gifts of Gods spirit, that they may bee fit mansion places for so worthy a guest. But by fornication they are made the sties & stables of the prince of darknesse.

Verse 16. Repent thy selfe, or els I come vnto thee shortly: and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.

Christ having laid downe the sins of this Church, and the errors of the Nicolaitans, doth here propound vnto this Church, First, a remedie for her recouerie: Secondly, a reason to inforce the practise of the remedie. The remedie is in these words: *Repent thy selfe*. In it consider these points: First, what it is to repent; Secondly, why Christ so often vrgeth thereunto: Thirdly, to whome Christ prescribeth this remedie. Of the first, we haue spoken in the first verse of this chapter: Briefly therefore, Repentance is a change of the mind from euill to good, and a turning from sinne vnto God. Here repentance must bee taken more largely, for all the duties that accompany repentance in the practise thereof: as I. *Humiliation* of a man by confessing of his sins vnto God, & condemning of himselfe for the sinne. II. *Praier*, whereby a man doth earnestly intreat the Lord for the pardon of the same sins. III. *Reformation*, whereby a man in hart propoeth, and in life in deuoreth to leaue all his former sins, & for euer after to do all things in obedience vnto God: vnto al these doth the holy ghost exhort them in this place.

II. point. Why doth Christ so often prescribe this dutie of repentance, and so much vrge it? *An.* Not for that it is a cause or a meritorious means to procure remission of sins & life euerlasting, as the Papists do falsly and damanably teach; for that nothing can do but the obedience & passion of Christ: but first because it is a token of Gods fauor procured, & a most excellent fruit of faith, such as maketh a man cease to do euill, & moueth him to do good: II. because it is a way wherein men must walk vnto the end, that would haue remission of sinnes, and life eternal.

III. point.

(a) 1. Co. 6. 19

III. point. To whome is this remedie prescribed? *Ans.* First to the church of Pergamus, and then to the Nicolaitans in that church, though they were most wicked men. Touching the church of Pergamus: they were before commended for most worthy graces, for they had repentance: and yet note, Christ sayth still vnto them, *Repent thy selfe.* Herein teaching vs a most worthy lesson, which every one ought to learne and practise: namely, that the life of a Christian is a continuall practise of repentance. When a man hath once repented, that is not sufficient; but every new day must haue a new repentance for his dayly slips. *Wee* (a) *are Gods ambassadors,* (saith Paul) *for Christ: beseeching you in Christs stead, that you would be reconciled vnto God.* Now they were reconciled to God before, for they are called (b) *the Temple of the liuing God;* His meaning therefore is, That they should strue more and more after reconciliation with God; both in regard of their further assurance, and also for their particular sinnes wherein they dayly offended. Euerie Christian must dayly wrestle with his owne corruptions, which he feeleth in himself, that the longer he liueth, the more hee may grow in dislike with himselfe. And in this distast of himselfe he must daily proceed, that he may every day more and more grow vp in Christ. And least any should thinke, that this was spoken to this church alone and not to vs: consider, that we are in the same case with them; their sinnes are our sins, as we haue proued: We want zeale and severitie against sin & sinners. Now being in the same fault with them; wee must therefore practise the same remedie, and renew our repentance, though wee haue repented heretofore.

Secondly, hee prescribes this dutie to the Nicolaitans, that held two damnable errors, and no doubt liued accordingly in those sinnes: and yet Christ barres them not from his kingdome, but bids them repent. Where note, that great and grievous sinners are not barred from gods mercie, if they wil repent. Excellent is that saying of *Isay*, *God is much in sparing:* and that of *Dauid* also, *With God is plenisfull redemption.* This point is seriously to be considered: for wee haue in our congregations many that are well spo-

ken of in the world: and yet for knowledge of God and practise of life, are flat Atheists. Wee haue also among vs Epicures, blasphemers, murtherers, and fornicators, with these Nicolaitans. Now to all these & such like, this doctrine appertaines, not to embolden them in sin, but to assure them there is mercie in store for them with God, if they will truly repent. They must not turne the grace of God to wantonnesse, & make his mercie a bolster to their iniquitie; for this is despising of Gods boiuntie, whereby they heape vp vnto themselves wrath against the day of wrath: but if with *Iob* they humble themselves in dust and ashes, and cry to heauen for mercy from a broken heart that carrieth a resolute purpose to leave all sinne; then, though their sinnes were neuer so many, they shall all bee drowned in the bottomlesse sea of Gods mercie: though they were as crimson and scarlet, which will take no other dye, yet in Christs blood they shall bee made as white as wool & snows: yea, though they haue fallen often into the same sins which is most fearefull and dangerous, yet vpon this vnfaigned repentance they shall bee restored to mercie: for the fountayne thereof cannot be dried vp: but see they doe repent, for whosoever looketh for Christs merits, must know that hee looketh for true repentance. Thus much for the remedie.

II. point. The reason whereby Christ would set an edge vpon the former remedie, containeth a twofold threatening or commination: the first, against the whole Church in these words: *If not, I come vnto thee shortly.* The second against the Nicolaitans in these words: *And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.* For the first, *If not, I will come vnto thee shortly,* these words were expounded in the fift verse. The meaning is this: If thou repent not, I will come vnto thee, and testifie my presence by taking punishment vpon thee, for thy want of zeale, and of severitie against sinne and sinners. To this effect the Prophet *Isay* saith, Chap. 30. 27. *The name of the Lord shal come from faire, so take punishment vpon the Assyrians.*

In this threatening the phrase is to be noted. Christ saith: *If not, I come vnto thee:* expressing a thing to come, by a word of the time present. To giue them to vnder-

(a) 2. Co. 5. 20

(b) Cap. 6. 16.

Psal. 130. 7.

stand; that his coming vnto them by iudgements was as certaine, as if it were present; vnlesse they did repent. Where this generall rule is to be obserued of all: namely, that when a Church or people do not repent, the Lord will come vnto them to execute his iudgements vpon them. Yea, though they haue before repented, if for particular sinnes and wants they do not renew their repentance, hee will surely come to punish them. This might be proued at large by testimonies of the Prophets & Apostles: but it is so euident in this text, that I omit al further prooffe; onely I will apply it to this our Church, of which this may bee truly sayd; Thou doest not repent, nor renew thy repentance for thy dayly sinnes. For albeit there bee some among vs, that by Gods grace repent and set themselves dayly to the exercise thereof: yet take the greater part of our congregations, and they are so far from renewing their repentance, that they doe not repent at all: for either they haue no knowledge of Gods wil; or if they haue knowledge, yet they want care and conscience to put the same in practise. This being our case and condition, what man may not bee a Prophet against our Churches and congregations, beeing thus directed by this portion of Scripture, to say and that truly, *That God wil come vnto vs in iudgements to plague: and punish vs for our sinnes and iniquities?* We may sooth our selues in hope of mercy still, but the state of our church continuing as it is, nothing can be expected but iudgements from the Lord. This then must be a motiue to perswade vs to repent, every person apart, and euery family and congregation apart; wee must humble our selues in dust and ashes for our sinnes past, entreating the Lord to bee reconciled vnto vs, and purpose fully in our hearts, and strue in our liues to obey God in all his commandments: yea, though wee can say we haue repented, yet for our daily wants and sinnes we must renew our repentance. Thus doing, we shall stay the Lord when hee is coming against vs. But if we go on in blindness, ignorance, & rebellion, following the lusts of our owne harts, then nothing but vengeance and iudgements are to bee expected: for this conclusion must stand with al churches and people: *If they repent not, God wil come in iudgements against them.*

The second threatening or commination is directed vnto the Nicolaitans, in these words: *And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth;* that is, I will be at enmitie with them, & testifie the same, by waging battell against those among you, that maintaine the lawfulnessse of eating things sacrificed to Idols, and of fornication. Thus I say will I fight against them with the sword of my mouth; that is, with the preaching of my word, the law, and the gospel.

In this commination Christ alludeth still to the storie of *Balaam*: for when he was sent for by *Balaam* to curse the people of God, the Lord stood against him in the way with a naked sword, to keepe him from going; and when his eyes were opened, that hee saw the Angell of the Lord withstand him in that sort, hee fell downe and adored the Angell, for it was the Lord: yet because he ceased not from his wicked couetousnesse, but gaue bad counsell against the Israelites, when hee could not curse them, to cause them to sinne: therefore hee was slaine with the edge of the sword among the Midianites by the children of Israel, *Num. 31. 8.* Euen so Christ dealeth with the Nicolaitans, because they go on in their bad counsell, perswading the lawfulnessse of eating things sacrificed to Idols, & also of fornication: therefore first he will fight against them with the sword of his mouth, the ministry of his word, therby to reclaime them from their wicked wayes, if it bee possible: but if that will not serue, he will still fight against them, & with the same sword destroy them for euer.

First, here marke, Christ saith not, *I will kill them, but fight against them:* for hee intended not at the first to destroy these Nicolaitans, but his purpose was to withdraw them from their wicked wayes; yet so, as afterward if they would not be reclaimed by his word, he would therewith destroy them. Wherein wee may behold the exceeding patience of Christ Iesus towards lewd and greuous sinners, that maintained the lawfulnessse of idolatrie and fornication, and gaue themselves therunto. *So the Lord (a) in spirit strons with the old world, and spared them 120. years to withdraw them from their wickednesse* (1) Gen. 6. 3.

ness by the preaching of Noe. So likewise he spared the Ammonites *(b) till their sins were come to the full*; and the Egyptians also for many hundred yeares, though they were most cruell persecutors of his own people. And though the Jews most maliciously crucified the Lord of life; yet he spared them fiftie yeares, before hee cut them off from being a people. Yea, dayly experience teacheth vs this his long suffering: we may heare most bloudy and bitter othes from blasphemers, whereby they dayly crucifie Christ with their tounges. The like may be said of the adulterers, and all cruell persons, and yet he forbears the same: yea, in our owne selues wee daily tast of this his patience: for so soone as we were borne, wee deserved to be cast into hell, and yet in mercy he vouchsafeth vnto vs, to some twentie, to some thirty, and to some moe yeres, for a time of repentance; when as euery day he might in iustice condemne vs. This therefore must admonish vs in the feare of God, not to abuse this his long suffering any longer, but now while the day of mercie lasteth, to humble our selues, and turne vnto him by true repentance. These are the dayes of grace, but how long they will last, God onely knoweth: for when death once commeth, he sheweth no more mercie. The old world, because they abused the long suffering of God *(c) were destroyed, and are now in helim prison for it*, as Peter teacheth. And vndoubtedly the same prison will bee our portion, if wee take the same course that they did.

(b) Ge. 15. 16
(c) 1. Pe. 3. 19
20.

Secondly, in this threatening we may obserue, that all irrepentant sinners haue God for their enemy, to fight against them with a drawn sword. For this cause sinne in Scripture is called rebellion, and euery sinner is a rebell against God. A fearefull thing it is to haue God for an enemy: and yet this is the condition, not onely of such as did neuer repent, but of all those that hold the name of Christ in profession, and yet continue in any one sin, without renewing their repentance. This also must serue to induce euery man that hath not repented, now to begin: and if they haue begun, to repent more, dayly renewing the same for their daily slips, and so shal they be the friends of Christ, as *(d) Abraham was*, and as his

(d) Gen. 22. 12

disciples were, *Ioh. 15. 15.*

Thirdly, in these two threatenings Christ sheweth himselfe to bee the true Doctor of his Church: for hee will fight against these Nicholaitans, when as hee will onely come vnto his church. Where wee see hee diuideth his word aright: wherein consisteth the principall wisdom of a true Prophet, giuing comforts to whom comfort belongeth, and threatening iudgements to whome iudgement is due; and making difference of iudgements according to the state of the persons against whom they are threatened. For the heavy iudgements of God must not be threatned against all persons, but against the impenitent. And because there be degrees of iudgements, temporall, and eternall; therefore temporall iudgements must be threatened to those to whom they belong, & eternal iudgements denounced against those to whom they belong: obseruing the circumstances of time, place, and persons, according to Christs example in this place, and elsewhere. So likewise the benefits of the Gospell are not to be propounded to euery person hand ouer head without difference, but with restraint to some onely, as Gods Prophets haue done. It is often a great offence in the Church, when the benefits of the Gospell are propounded to all, and the threatening of the law denounced against all, without limitation or restraint. The conditions therefore of repentance & impenitencie, of faith and vnbeleefe, and also the degrees of them all, must carefully bee obserued in the dispensation of the Law and the Gospell.

Fourthly, the end of Christs fighting must be considered: for first hee intends to reclaime them from their euill wayes, but if they will not be reclaimed, then to cause the same word to be an occasion of their deeper condemnation. This must be deeply weighed of vs all, who haue had by Gods mercy for many yeres the plentifull preaching of the gospell, by which God hath continually rebuked & checked the sinnes that bee among vs, as ignorance, blasphemie, & filthinesse, crueltye, and all iniquities whatsoever: and the same thing the Lord yet continues to doe vnto vs. Wee therefore must thinke, that all this while the Lord is fighting against

against vs: when ignorance is reprooved in the ministerie of the word, the ignorant person must think the Lord is fighting against him, and so all Atheists, blasphemers, adulterers, oppressors, and cruell persons, when their sinnes are reprooved, they must know that the Lord stands face to face against them with the sword of his mouth, seeking to reclaim them from these iniquities, as hee did to *Balaam* in his way. And when any mans sinnes be thus touched, hee must not rebell, but humble himselfe, as *Balaam* fell before the Angell: considering it is the Lord that wageth battell against him. When wee heare that forreine nations shake their swords against vs, how are wee moued, both high and low? Shall we feare the sword of mortall man, and shall we not tremble when we heare that the sword of the euerliuing God is shaken against vs? Those therefore whose hearts are guiltie of any one sinne, must humble themselves by true and speedie repentance, there is no withstanding of the Lord: if his sword do not cure vs, it will cut vs in peeces: if his word doe not conuert vs from our sinnes, it will bee an occasion to cast our soules deeper into hell. Thus he dealt with *Balaam*, when he would not be restrained from giuing bad counsell, he was slaine among the Midianites. Few thinke on these things; from whence commeth such great contempt of Gods ordinance in the ministerie of the word, as we see at this day: but they must know, that either death or life come by the stroke of this sword, and therefore they must repent.

Fifthly, note the title giuen to Gods word: it is called *The sword of Christs mouth*: not only because it was once deliuered by himselfe, from his own mouth, but because it doth daily proceed from his mouth: for the ministers of the Gospel, which be truely called, are the very mouth of Christ, from which Gods people receiue his word. (a) *If thou shalt returne* (saith the Lord to *Jeremie*) *and shalt seperate the precious from the vile, then shalt thou stand before me, and be according to my word.* 2. Cor. 5. 19. Wee are the embassadours of Christ, beseeching you in his steed: which is an high and wonderfull honor. The consideration whereof is a ground of sundry duties.

(a) Jer. 15. 19.

First, all students that are in the way of preparation to higher callings, must hereby learne to conceiue a good opinion of the Ministerie of the gospel, and to affect the same aboue other callings. For though the blind world count it a base calling, yet Christ wee see maketh the minister his owne mouth: which honour is not giuen either to the Lawyer or to the Physitian.

Secondly, hereby euery Minister of the Gospel is taught to deliuer nothing in his publike ministerie, but the pure word of God, so farre forth as Christ shall enable him: and that also in so pure a manner, as in the persuation of his own conscience hee thinks Christ would speake, if he were there present; like vnto faithfull embassadours, who speake onely the will of their lord and prince, and in that manner which their lord and prince doth best approue. If this were well weighed, wee should not haue such preaching as is commonly vsed, consisting of a mixture of tellmonies, partly diuine, and partly humane, considering that neither Christ nor his Apostles preached so.

Thirdly, the people also are hence taught their dutie: when they heare a sinfull man like vnto themselves speake vnto them in the ministerie of the word, they must not despise Gods ordinance, because it is deliuered by man, but receiue the same, as from the mouth of Christ, and as the pure word of God, so far forth as it consenteth with holy scripture. In this behalf *Paul* blessed God for the Thessalonians, *That they receiued the word from him, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God,* 1. Thessal. 2. verse 13.

Sixtly, where Christ sayth, *I will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.* We may obserue, that the kingdom of Christ is spirituall, and not of this world: for if it were worldly, then a cuile sword wielded by the hand of man, should belong vnto him: But he hath no such sword, he gouernes his church and people by the sword of his mouth, his holy word. Wherby appeareth, that the primacie of the sea of Rome is from hell, not from heauen: for the Pope saith he is Christs vicar, and yet he will be armed with both swords: when as Christ dealeth not with the

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the ciuill sword, but only with the sword of his mouth.

Verse 17. *Let him that hath an ear heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches: To him that ouercometh will I giue to eat of the Manna which is hid, and will giue him a white Stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, sauing he that receiveth it.*

These words are the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts, a commandement, and a promise. The commandement in these words, *Let him that hath an ear heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches.* The promise in the words following, *To him that ouercometh, &c.* The commandement serueth to stir vp Gods church to attention, in marking that which Christ deliuereth vnto them, as hath beene shewed before verse 7.

In this commandement of Christ note two things: First, that all men in Gods church are bound in conscience to frequent Sermons, whereby they may come to the knowledge of those things that God prescribeth vnto them. At the natiuitie, Easter, and such good times as they are called, ignorant people will come to the church: but it may be not once more of a moneth after, or a quarter of a yeare. But Christ saith, (a) *My sheepe heare my voice.* So that hee that will not come to heare the voyce of Christ, is none of his sheepe. Math. 16. 19. Christ saith to Peter, *I will giue thee the keyes of the kingdom of heauen.* There the preaching of the Gospel, is the key of the kingdom of heauen: So that looke how necessary it is for a man to haue his soule saved and to enter into heauen, so behoouefull it is for him to heare Sermons: for that is the turning of the key whereby wee enter into this kingdom. 2. Cor. 5. 18. the preaching of the gospel is the doctrine of reconciliation: and therefore looke how necessarie it is for a man to be reconciled to God; so needfull it is for him to heare the word preached. *Hee that is of God heareth Gods word: and he that heareth it not is not of God,* 1. Job. 4. 6. But men haue many excuses to exempt themselves from hearing Sermons: Some say if God himselfe would preach, or Christ, or an Angel from heauen, then they would heare; but so long

as sinfull man preacheth it is no great matter though they absent themselves.

Ans. This is a presumptuous reason: for the preaching of the gospel by man, is Gods owne ordinance; and that for these causes: First, since Adams fall man cannot abide the voyce of God: so as if man should heare God speake, hee would cry out with the Iewes, Exod. 20. 19. *Let not God talke with vs lest we dye.* And with Pe-

ter (b) *Depart from me, I am a miserable sinner.* Secondly, God speaketh by man to trie the obedience and humilitie of men; to see whether they would be content to receiue and beleue his word, being propounded by sinfull man that is like vnto themselves: And thirdly, to maintaine loue betweene man and man, by mutuall conuersing in this holy ordinance. Others do say, they may well ynough keep themselves in their families, for there they haue their Bible wherein be the sermons of Christ, and of his Prophets and Apostles, than which no minister can preach better. *Ans.* It is Gods ordinance, that these Sermons of Christ, of the Prophets, and Apostles, should bee againe handled, preached, & expounded in his church: & therefore euery man is bound in conscience to come into the congregations, and there to heare with reuerence Gods holy word. Others will not come to the church, for (they thanke God) they can serue God with as good a hart on horse-back, or on their iourneyes, as those that come vnto the Sermons.

Ans. These persons are blind and ignorant, a seduced heart beguileth them, and therefore they despise the ordinance of God: but let them heare what Salomon saith, (c) *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, that is, the doctrine of God: euen his prayer shall bee abhominable.* God speaketh to vs in the ministerie of his word, and if wee refuse to heare him there, shall wee thinke hee will heare vs when wee pray? Know therefore, if thou refuse his word, hee will refuse thy prayers: neither indeed can any without the word pray aright: Such people deceiue themselves, their prayers in their needlesse iourneyes shall bee their iudges to condemn them: for therein they confesse God is to bee worshipped, and yet in practise they reiect his direction for the same. Lastly, others say they

(b) Luke 5. 8.

(a) Joh. 10. 27

(c) Pro. 28. 9.

they haue knowledge ynough, the ministers can teach them no more than they know: and therefore they need not goe heare so much preaching. *Answ.* These that pretend such perfect knowledge, are commonly the most ignorant, not knowing the end of this ordinance of God: for preaching serueth not only to teach men to know God and his will; but also to increase in knowledge, and to yeeld obedience to that which they know. If therefore thou hast knowledge, it is well; but that is not ynough, if thou wouldest bee blessed thou must doe that which thou knowest, Ioh. 13. 17. And for this cause the most learned man that is, must still frequent the hearing of Sermons, to further himselfe in obedience: because a man may know much, and yet want conscience to obey.

Secondly, in this commandement men are inioyned the reading of the word, & hearing of it read, not onely publickely, but also priuately in their families: that thereby also they may come to the knowledge of that thing which Christ propoundeth vnto them. Luk. 10. 26. *Christ saith to one of the Scribes; what is written, how readest thou.* Taking it for granted, that men must read the Scriptures priuately. And the Lord saith (a) *My people go into captivity, because they haue no knowledge:* yea they perish, Hos. 4. 6. But wo- full is the defect of this dutie; for many haue not the Bible in their houses for their priuat exercise in the word: and in many families it is set vp for a shew, or lieth couered with dust, when as cards and tables are worne with vse. It is not amisse for men to get the statutes of the land into their houses, and to read therein for the knowledge of mens lawes: but yet herein they are blame worthy, that either they haue not, or els regard not the book of God, whereby they might be acquainted with the statutes of the Lord: for the better guiding of our vnurly affections. Other things in this commaundement haue bene observed before.

The second part of this conclusion, is an excellent promise made to him that ouercommeth, which for substance hath bene handled in the conclusion of the former Epistles. Here onely some speciall blessings are particularly promised: In the handling whereof two points are

to be considered: First, the persons to whom the promise is made, *To him that ouercommeth:* whereof entreatie was made before verse 7. Secondly, the blessings promised, comprised in this threefold gift of God: First, *To eat of the Manna which is hid:* Secondly, *To receive a white stone:* Thirdly, *A new name written in the stone.* All which three signifie in effect, *The election, vocation, justification, and glorification of Gods people.* But I will handle them in particular. The I. benefit is, *The giuing of the hidden Manna to eat.* Manna properly signifieth that food which god gaue from the clouds to the people of Israel, which for the excellencie of it, is called, *The (b) bread of heauen. The (c) food of the strong, or the food of angels.* In forme it was like (d) *Coriander seed, and in colour white, in tast it was pleasant & sweet.* Herewith God fed his people in the wilderness 40. yerres: to (e) teach them, *That man liueth not by bread only, but by euery word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* This is thought to be the same white Manna which is vsed in shops at this day, but I wil not dispute thereof, seeing it is doubtfull. That Manna did represent a more excellent food: and therefore Paul calleth it, (f) *A spirituall meat,* because it represented vnto them the spirituall food of the soule, Christ Iesus the true Manna, (g) *The liuing bread that came downe from heauen:* as we may see at large, Ioh. 6. And so in this place by Manna, wee must not vnderstand the Manna of the people of Israel: But Christ himselfe the true food of life eternall. How Christ doth become vnto vs our spirituall Manna, and the true food of life, I will shew by these conclusions. I. He is this food, not in regard of his doctrine, or of his miracles, nor yet onely in regard of the blessings of his death and passion: But Christ himselfe God and man is true food of life, as is shewed at large, Iohn 6. And in Christ himselfe are his death and passion, & the benefits thereof, food vnto the soule. II. *Conclus.* Christ is this food, not as hee lay in the manger, or as he now sitteth in heauen at the right hand of his father: but as he suffered the wrath of God and pangs of hell vpon the crosse, and as he died & was buried; for our life commeth out of Christs death. III. *Concl.* He is this food, not in regard of his godhead, for that no

(b) Psal. 78. 24
(c) Ver. 25.

(d) Exod. 16
31.

(e) Deu. 8. 3.

(f) Cor. 10. 3.

(g) Ioh. 6. 51.

(a) Ilay 5. 13.

creature can receive or apply to his iustification, or sanctification: but in regard of his manhood, subsisting in the person of the son of God. Christs flesh profiteth nothing, severed from the godhead: but yet his body and blood have this virtue, to be true spirituall food, because they are the flesh and blood of that person which is God. IV. *Concl.* Christ is not a bodily food to be received with the hand, eaten with the mouth, & digested in the stomach: but he is a spirituall food, to be received, applied, & digested by faith: And being so received hee doth preserve the soule vnto eternal life. This faith is that whereby a man is enabled to beleue that Christ crucified is his Christ. And thus doth he become our spirituall Manna, when by true faith we assure our selves that he suffered for our sinne, and rose againe for our righteousness.

The 7th.

Is Christ crucified, the true bread of life, and our spirituall Manna: then should we long after him, with a true spirituall hunger in our very hearts, as truly as any man longeth after meat & drink. When a man is famished, for the staying of his hunger he will pull his owne flesh from his bones and eate it: Even so, for the satisfying of our hungry soules with Christ Iesus this food of life, we must forsake the dearest thing in all the world, though it bee our owne flesh: For that which we wil do for our bodies, we must do much more for our soules. *Que.* How shall we attaine to this true spiritual hunger? *Ans.* It is with the hunger of the soule, as it is with the hunger of the body. In bodily hunger be two things: A great paine in the stomacke for want of nourishment: And a strong and earnest appetite, which continueth till the stomacke be filled. Even so we should feelee a paine in our hearts, rising from a sense of the wrath of God for our sinnes: And then wee must labour to have a greedie appetite, and earnest desire to bee filled with Christ crucified; & never be at rest till we be satiated with the merit of his passion, which only can free vs from Gods wrath, and fill vs with true ioy. But wofull be these times: for there is in most mens hearts a deadnesse of spirit, whereby they are made insensible of inward wants and miseries: They are like vnto full men that feelee no paine for want of

food. There is indeed an hunger, nay a greedie worne in many after the profits, pleasures, and honours of this world: but few or none do hunger after Christ. But if wee would *have* (a) *a part in the feasts of the Lambe*, we must labour to have this longing appetite after Christ: If we bee full stomacked we shal have no refreshing from his merits. *Mary* saith truly in her song, (b) *God filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich & full go away empty*. Which is a most fearefull curse, when the soule is debarrd from the food of life. But (c) *blessed are we if we hunger after Christ & his righteousness*, for then we shal be satisfied: Christ will give vnto vs our fill of the water of life freely, *Reue. 21. 6.*

Secondly, here we may take a view of the profane madnesse of the world: For though this bread of life Christ Iesus, be the most excellent food of all, farre surpassing the Israelits Manna, the food of Angels; yet it is nothing or little desired. Men are like to the foolish Israelits that had more regard to *leeks, and onions, and to the flesh pott of Egypt* than to the Angels food which God gave them from heauen. They spend their wits, & their strength, by day & by night that they may satiate themselves with the fraile riches and vaine pleasures of the world: And yet these men haue the name to be the onely men, whereas indeed they are profane *Esaus*, & wicked Israelits. As therefore this practise is damnable: so must we learne to detest it. And on the contrarie, seeing Christ Iesus is the true Manna, our principall care and desire must bee to bee fed therewith. Wee must thinke it is a great disgrace to Christ Iesus, which hee cannot endure without reuenge, that we should haue lesse regard to him the true bread of life, than to earthly food which perisheth.

Thirdly, here wee may see that which is visuall in the Scripture intreating of the Sacraments, to wit, the name of the signe giuen to the thing signified: for Christ here promisseth them Manna, meaning thereby not the Israelits food, but himselfe, whereof their Manna was a signe, a seale, a pledge: as appeareth plaine, because *Paul* calleth it *spirituall meat*, *1. Cor. 10. 3.*

Further Christ is not only called *Manna*, but *hidden Manna*, to put a difference betwene

between himselfe and the Manna of the Israelites which was visible that euery man might see. And Christ is called hidden Manna for two causes: first, because no man by nature knoweth this food, or desireth it: secondly, because God doth not reueale this food to all men effectually; as may appeare, Mat. 13. 35. *I giue thee thanks (oh father) that thou hast hidden these things, (that is, the doctrine of the gospell and the mysteries of the kingdome of heauen) from the great and wise men of the world, and hast opened them vnto babes.*

The Vse.

Is Christ hidden Manna? then first here learne to take knowledge of the state of men in the world: They know not Christ, neither do they feele in themselves any want of this food, and therefore they know not what it meaneth for meat and drinke is neuer knowne, till a man be hungry. Yea, to many that liue in the Church this Manna is hidden: for though men hear the doctrine of Christ, yet not one of an hundred feele in themselves any want of Christ: let the conscience speake and this will proue true. Ignorant people blesse themselves and say all is well; Christ is a saviour: when as indeed to them Christ is hidden. Nay which is yet more lamentable, to many which teach and preach Christ, Christ is hidden Manna: for many of them neuer felt in their hearts and conscience, that they had need of Christ for the pardon of their sinnes, and the saluation of their soules. It is not the knowledge in the brain that maketh Christ known to man; but knowledge in the conscience, when a man feesles in his heart and soule, that hee stands in need of the blood of Christ, & all the benefits of his passion for his redemption & saluation. And seeing this is the condition of the world, wee on the contrarie must labor to feele in our selues our owne pouertie, & to see in our selues that we stand in need of Christ, and of all the benefits of his passion, to free our souls from the gulfe of hell, and the wroth of God. Away with bare mentall knowledge: for till we haue this true sense of our owne wants, wee can neuer get into our hearts any sound grace.

Secondly, is Christs hidden bread not reuealed to all? Then calling effectually to saluation (so as if hee will, euery man may be saved) is not vniuersall: for then

should Christ not be hidden, but reuealed to all: which is not so. Election therefore and effectual vocation is definite & particular. And thus much of the first branch of this gift.

The second gift, is *a white stone*. Here Christ borroweth a comparison from the custome and manner of the gentiles, to whom these Epistles are directed. A white stone was of great vse among the: For first, the iudge in giuing sentence, vsed white stones, and blacke stones: the giuing of a white stone was a token of absolution; the giuing of a blacke stone, a signe of condemnation. Here then the giuing of a white stone, may signifie *absolution from Christ, of all mans sinnes & trespasses*. Again, when the gentiles would know, which were luckie daies (as they speake) and which were vnluckie; they vsed to cast lots with white and blacke stones, and that day which light on a white stone was iudged to be a lucky day, that which light on a blacke stone was iudged to be vnlucky. This practise they vsed as might be shewed by sufficient records. And though this practise haue no warrant, yet may Christ allude vnto it, to signifie vnto them that hee will giue them good successe in all their actions; yea happie daies, and a blessed life full of all ioyes and pleasures. Others doe expound it of giuing victorie, whereof the giuing of a white stone was a signe: but this is not so fit, neither can it be shewed by true record that they had such a practise. I rather take it Christ alludeth to the first, and here premisseth to him that ouercometh, the true remission of all his sinnes, and full absolution; not in regard of ciuill punishment, but in respect of guilt and punishment before God, which is eternall damnation.

Here note one infallible token of the pardon of sinne: namely, to overcome, that is, to renounce our selues, and by faith reke wholly on Christ, testifying this faith by maintaining good conscience and true religion vnto the end: And therefore if any desire to know whether God haue absolved him of his sinnes, let him labour thus to overcome, and then shall this assurance be sealed vnto him.

The third gift is, *a new name written*

in

12. B.

in the *sons*. What this new name should be *S. Iohn* expresseth in his first Epistle, cap. 3. vers. 1. saying: *Behold, what love the father hath shewed to us that wee should bee called the sons of God.* This new name therefore is to be the *son & heire of God in Christ*. And because it is given of God himselfe, therefore wee must not thinke it is an idle name, or a bare title onely: but withall God giueth him a new condition, whereof this name is a token and title. God changed *Abraams* name, & called him *Abraham*; but it was when he had changed his estate, and made him the father of the faithfull. And there was a change in *Iacob*, when god called him *Israel*. This new name then signifieth the giuing of a new estate to a man or woman, which they had not before: namely, their regeneration, wherby they are made to die vnto sin, and to liue vnto God: for therewith goeth the blessing of adoption, wherby they become the sonnes of God, and heirs with Christ, and so haue heaven and earth for their possession: & all miseries and crosses, yea sinne it selfe turning to their good; they haue also the protection of Gods holy Angels in this life, and at the last gaspe death to bee no death, but a strait passage to eternall life.

Further, this new name is said to bee written in the *white stones*: that is, in the pledge of absolution: which sheweth the vnion of these two: Absolution, & Regeneration. So that whom the Lord of his mercie absolues from their sinnes, them in his bounty he brings to a new estate & condition. He that is in Christ, is a new creature, 2. Cor. 5. 17. A point to be obserued, as yeelding speciall aduice to reforme the grosse & common abuse of Christ. Men perswade themselves, that Christ is their Sauour, and will pardon their sinnes, for he is mercifull: and therupon they take occasion to liue as they list. But let no man herewith deceiue himselfe: for they that haue absolution, haue regeneration also: a new condition of life goes with the fruition of Gods mercie in Christ: they that goe on in sin, haue not the pardon of sinne: the corruption of sinne must be abolished, where the guilt of sinne is absolved; and their liues are reformed that haue their sins remitted. Here some man may say, Why are not those called by this new name, to whom

Christ giues it, for visually men are called after their names? The answer is made in the end of the verse: *Because no man knoweth that name save he that receiveth it:* that is, in that manner and certainty as he that receiveth it. And therefore the children of God must not bee much offended when they are reuiled for their profession, because the world knowes not their estate.

Here we may obserue diuerse points: First, that he which is the child of God, and hath this new name giue him, knows that he is Gods child, iustified and sanctified. Neither is this knowledge by probable coniecture onely, and good hope, as the Papists would haue it; but certaine and infallible: for all others should know it as well as hee that receiveth it: which is here denied. Each one is bound in charitie to bee perswaded, that godly professors are the sons & daughters of God: But the man himselfe that hath receiued this new name and new estate, he knowes it otherwise, and therefore certainly and infallibly.

Secondly, if no man know this name but hee that receiveth it; then can none beside God and the conscience, know from within the man, his particular faith and adoption. And hereby we are to be admonished, to beware of charging the euill and hard censure of hypocrisie vpon any that liue in the church: in so doing we overshoot our selues: this iudgement belongs to God, not to man, saue onely to the man himselfe; for wee cannot discern the good within the man properly, but by effects. *Quest.* How far forth may a man iudge of another mans election? *Ans.* There be two degrees of iudgement: iudgement of certaintie, and iudgement of charitie. Iudgement of certaintie is when a man can set downe certaintie, such a man shall be saved: This is peremptorie iudgement belonging vnto God, and to some men onely, so farre forth as the Lord reuealeth it vnto them: as he did the estat of some men, to *Dauid* and to some Prophets. Wherupon *Dauid* sometimes praies for the final destruction of his enemies: but this is not giuen ordinarily, no not to gods ministers. The iudgement of charity is that which binds a man to iudge the best of another: and herein betwo degrees. First, touching the

the vnregenerate, charitie binds vs, not to despaire of such as yet liue profanely; but to hope that God will in good time call them. And touching the regenerate, who haue giue good testimonies of their vocation, charitie binds vs to be perswaded without doubt that they be the children of God. And this we may do without repugnance to this place: for though wee cannot from within the man know his estate, yet by the fruits we may; which is the highest degree of iudgement that charitie can exercise.

Thirdly, here wee see the Church of Rome is deceiued, who make *Visibilitie* the marke of Gods Church: for Gods church is a companie of men which beleeue: the ground of the church is Gods election, and adoption, and mans faith, which none other can see but the parties that haue them. The signes thereof may be seene, but properly the church cannot be seene. It comes to be visible by the fruits of election, and by the outward works of loue, which proceed from faith. We therefore hold farre better, that wee beleeue there is a church, and not that we see the church.

Lastly, if others know not the name of Gods children, then what maruell is it, if the wicked miscall them? *1. Iohn 3. 2. The world knowes vs not.* Gods children therefore must not be daunted at the reproches of the wicked, but pray with Christ, *Father forgive them, they know not what they doe,* Luk. 23. 34.

Verse 18. *And vnto the Angell which is at Thyatira write, These things saith the sonne of God, which hath his eyes like to a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brasse.*

Here followeth the fourth particular commaundement of Christ vnto Iohn, as also the fourth particular Epistle. The commaundement in these words: *To the Angell which is at Thyatira write;* of the substance of this commaundement I haue spoken before: onely remember the end thereof, which is to certifie this church of Thyatira, that Iohn had a calling and commaundement from God to write this Epistle vnto them: and further to certifie the whole Church of God, to the end of the world, of his calling to write this

booke of the Reuelation.

The Epistle it self containeth three parts: a Preface, a Proposition, and a conclusion. The Preface in these words:

These things saith the sonne of God, which hath his eyes like vnto a flame of fire, & his feet like fine brasse: al which things almost haue beene handled in the beginning of this chapter, and in the former, from whence

they are borrowed. In the Preface, first is set down in whose name the Epistle is written, to wit, in Christs name: the causes thereof we haue shewed before. Then Christ is described by three arguments:

First, *To be the son of God;* Secondly, *To haue eyes like a flame of fire:* Thirdly, *To haue feet like fine brasse.* For the first in the former chapter he was called *The sonne of man*; but here he is called *the sonne of God;* where by God we must not absolutely vnderstand the godhead of the whole Trinitie, but the person of the father, who being opposed either to the son or to the holy ghost, is usually called god: not that he is God more than the sonne, or than the holy ghost; but because he is the first in order, and because hee is that person from whom the godhead is communicated to the sonne and to the holy ghost.

So that here Christ is called the sonne of the father: which mysterie wee cannot fully vnderstand, for the word hath not revealed the same: neither can wee find it elsewhere out of the word. But yet for the better conceiuing thereof, remember these two rules. I. That Christ is the son of the father, not in respect of his godhead, but in respect of his person: For the godhead of the sonne is the same with the godhead of the father: The godhead of the father doth not beget, neither is the godhead of the sonne begotten. II. Rule. Christ is the sonne of the father, not by creation, as the Angels and Adam were; nor by adoption, as euerie beleeuer is; but by nature, in that hee is begotten of the substance of his father before all worlds: for the father communicates from himself the whole godhead that is in himself vnto his son.

Christ is here called the sonne of God, to stirre vp reverence, attention, and care in this church, in marking and obeying the things that follow in this particular Epistle. And in their example Christ also teacheth vs, that when we hear the word of

Ver. 5. 14. 15

n. 15.

The Vse.

of God preached or read vnto vs, wee should receiue it with feare, & trembling and reuerence: because he that speaketh vnto vs out of his word, is *the son of God*. When Pilas was about to condemne our Sauior Christ, he heard it said, that *Christ was the sonne of God*. And thereupon hee trembled, & was the more afraid, Ioh. 19. verse 8. Shall a silly heathen man that knowes not Christ tremble towards him when he heares his name; and yet wee that professe our selues to beleue in him bee nothing moued with reuerence towards him, when hee speakes vnto vs in his word? At his presence the hills melt, and at his voyce the rocks cleaue in sunder: and therefore if our hearts shall not melt and cleaue asunder with a reuerent feare when hee shall speake vnto vs, we are worser than these sencelesse creatures.

Secondly, Christ is said, *To haue eyes like a flame of fire*: which we must not conceiue literally. The words are borrowed from the former chapter, vers. 14. where Christ is described not as hee is in truth, but as he appeared to *Iohn* in vision. We haue shewed before what is signified by these fierie eyes: namely, Christs infinite wisdom in himselfe, and vigilant zeale over his church. The end wherefore hee so describeth himselfe to this church, is to giue them to vnderstand, that hee can see and discerne their very secret sinnes: for sundry among them were giuen to priuat offences, as to fornication and idolatrie, as we shall see afterward.

The V^{se}.

Here then wee haue an excellent remedie against secret sinnes: shame and feare of punishment will restraintsome men from open sinnes, but yet the same men when they are in secret, doe without feare commit priue sins against the first and second table. But these men must remember, that being withdrawne from the presence of men, they are yet in the presence of Christ: for he hath *ferie eyes*, wherewith he seeth their most secret sinnes, which they hide from the world. For though we may make faire weather with men, yet wee can neuer bleare the eyes of Christ. If fornicators, wantons, vsurers, and blasphemers, would remember this, by Gods grace it would bee a notable meanes at least to restrain them from their secret sinnes, if not to moue

them vnto the practise of true repentance.

Thirdly, Christ is said to haue *feet like fine brasse*. Whereby is signified (as hath beene shewed) his infinit power and strength, whereby he doth subdue sinne, Sathan, & all his enemies, first vnto himselfe, and then vnto his members. And Christ is thus described vnto this church, to terrifie certaine wicked men among them, that gaue themselues to fornication, idolatrie, and other sinnes: as also to affright this whole church, who by their wicked companie were almost drawne away to the same sinnes.

Here wee haue a notable remedie against loosenesse of life: namely, to consider that Christ, whom we call our Sauour, walketh continually in his Church, with feet of brasse to tread Sathan and all his enemies vnder his feet: and such are all that will not submit themselves to the regiment of his word, *Luke 19. 27*. If the blasphemers could consider this, it would stop his mouth: and when the adulterer, the theefe, or any sinner goeth about his wicked deuices, this by Gods grace would be a notable meanes to make him breake off his wicked purpose. When *Benhadad* heard, that the king of Israel would come against him in battel, *(a) He sent his men with ropes about their neckes to craue peace*, and in them humbled himselfe. Shall men be thus afraid of the fury of man, and shall not wee tremble and feare at the fury of Christ, who hath these feet of brasse to trample in peeces all his enemies? The want of this consideration is one mayne cause why sinne doth abound.

The V^{se}.

(a) 2. King. 19. 31.

Verse 19. *I know thy workes, and thy loue and seruice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy deeds, which are more at the last than at the first.*

Here begins the second part of this Epistle, to wit, the Proposition; which containeth the substance & matter thereof: and it hath two parts; a commendation of this church, and a rebuke thereof. The commendation in the 19. verse; the rebuke or dispraise in the 20. verse, and those that follow, almost to the end of the chapter. The commendation is twofold: generall in these words, *I know thy workes*.

N

works. This hath beene handled before, vers. 2. The particular commendation standeth in five notable works: to wit, *Loue, Service, Faith, Patience, and Encrease in godlinesse*.

For the first, by *Loue* wee must vnderstand *Loue to men*: for afterward they are commended in duties to God, in faith & patience: but loue and service are duties of man to man. Touching Loue note three points: What this loue is; What is the propertie of this loue; and how it is to be practised. First, *Loue to man is a gift of the spirit of God, whereby a man is well affected to his neighbour for Gods sake*. That loue is a gift of the Spirit, is plaine, *Galas. 5. vers. 22*, where it is reckoned among the gifts of the spirit. Next I adde, *That hereby a man is well affected to his neighbour*. To bee well affected to another, is to reioyce at his good, and to desire and seeke the same; and withall to bee grieved at his miserie, and to beare the bowels of compassion towards him, being readie to releuee and helpe him to our uttermost. By *Neighbour*, wee must not vnderstand onely those that are neere vnto vs in habitation, but euen all those that are of the same nature with vs, euen any of mankind. Hee is thy neighbour, that is a man as thou art, and so bearing the image of God as thou doest, bee hee friend or foe, neere or stranger vnto thee; and to him must thou bee well affected. Lastly, I say, *For Gods sake*: for God is first and principally to bee loued for himselfe, and man in God and for God, because hee is the creature of God, and beareth his image. The loue wee beare to man, is a fruit of our loue vnto God: for this commandement wee haue of him, *That hee that loveth God, should loue his brother also, 1. Iohn 4. 21.*

II. point. The propertie of this loue is, *To be feruent*; and that for two causes: First, it need require, euery man is bound within his calling to testifie his loue ^(*)by giving his life for his neighbour, though hee be our enemy, or a stranger; which wee shall neuer do, vnlesse our loue bee feruent. Secondly, there is much ingratitude, hatred, emulation, and many injuries in the world: Now the persons from whom these come must be loued: the vnworthinesse of the partie must not quench our

loue, but it must burne when the waters of mens injuries & malice would quench the same.

III. point. The practise of our loue must bee squared by this rule, *The loue of our selues*; as wee wish our owne good heartily, so we must wish our neighbours good. This is the law of Nature, *To do as a man would be done vnto*: And it is the law of God, *Thou shalt loue thy neighbour as thy selfe*. Example: A man of some trade is to make a bargaine, and if he will lye, or vse false weights and measures, he may aduantage himselfe. This the diuell and his owne corruption will suggest vnto him, while hee is about the bargaine: hee therefore must call to mind this rule of loue, and examine his owne heart, whether hee would haue another man to deceive him by lying, by false weights, &c. The same thing must men doe, when they are tempted to oppression or crueltie, let them thinke whether they would haue others to wrong or oppress them; and so shew forth loue by this rule, doing as they would be done vnto. It were to bee wished, that our Church might haue the deserved prayse of this vertue of loue: But Christ foretold of these our dayes, *That loue should waxe cold*, *Matth. 24. 12.* And ^(*)that men should be louers of themselves. And so it is, for euery man now is for himselfe, no man seekes anothers good. Go through townes, markets, and faires, and rare it is to find a man that in his affaires seeketh the common good, as well as his owne. For this is the common rule, *May I not make of mine owne what I will?* But he that hath the grace of loue, *Seeketh not his owne onely, but the good of others also*, *1. Corinth. 13. 5.*

Here then we must learne to practise this vertue, that wee may haue Christs commendation with this church. Euery man in the general calling of a Christian will make great shew of loue; as when he comes to the Lords table, & in prayer: But in their particular affaires few shew forth true loue; nay many by lying, oppression, crueltie, *Flee the skinne from the flesh, and the flesh from the bone of the poore, & breake the bones within the flesh, and chop them as for the pot*, as the Prophet speaketh. These little consider this rule, or that account which the Lord will take of them,

(*) Ioh. 3. 16.

The Vse.

Mich. 3. 2, 3.

them, who hath sworn *never to forget these works*, Amos 8. 7. Learne therefore in thy particular calling to shew forth loue, and imploy thy commodities, not for thy selfe alone, but for the good of those with whom thou liuest: herein is loue, & hereby shalt thou be knowne to bee the *servant of Christ*, Ioh. 13. 35. and the child of God, *Translated from death to life*, 1. Ioh. 3. ver. 14.

The second thing for which this church is commended, is *service*, To omit the diuers significations of the word, here it betokeneth a worke of loue, whereby a man within the compasse of his calling becomes a seruant vnto euerie man for that mans good. Read Heb. 6. 10, where this is both commended and described. Gal. 5. 13. *Do service one to another in loue*. 1. Cor. 13. 5 *Loue seeketh not her owne, but maketh her selfe seruant to all, to doe them good*. And Christs commandment is, *Let him that would be chiefe among you, bee as the seruant*, Lu. 22. 26. Now the principall part of this service is, when a man is readie with his goods, according to his abilitie, to help the poore, especially those that be godly. This is a fruit of loue, and therefore it is here set after it, as also in the places before named, Hebr. 6. verse 10. Gal. 5. 13.

The 3rd.

It were to bee wished that our church & people might haue the like praise for this vertue. But the richer sort spend their substance and wealth vpon haikes and hounds, buls, and beares, vpon costly attire, and banqueting: so as when the poore that are in need come for reliefe, they haue nothing to spare; and if any thing bee giuen, it is drawne as hardly from them as a ribbe out of their side: Men will giue frankly to delight themselves with playes and pastimes, & such like vanities; but the poore that bee their owne flesh, may die in the streets for want of that which men giue to their dogges. But if wee respect the commendation of Christ Iesus, let vs abandon these vanities which hinder vs in the practise of this vertue of *service* for the good of our brethren. And to induce all men hereto, let them consider, 1. how the church of the old testament was charged with giuing the first fruits of their wine, corne, and oyle: and likewise with many sacrifices and ceremonies which belon-

ged to the temple: these things indeed be ceased, and yet wee may not mispend these goods which hereby are spared; for in the New testament the poore are in steed of the altar, and they must haue that which the altar had among the Iewes. Againe, *Isay 58. 18. He that poureth forth his soule to be hungrie*, that is, hee that seeing the poore in miserie, hath the bowels of compassion moued towards them, and from his pitifull heart releueth their wants, according to his abilitie; his light shall neuer be put out, but shall spring out of the darkenesse, and his darkenesse shall be as the noone day. This is pure religion, and vndefiled before God, to visit the fatherlesse, and the widdow in their aduersitie. Remember this, *Hee that hath mercie vpon the poore, lendeth vnto the Lord*, Prou. 19. 17. So that when the poore come for reliefe, God commeth to borrow of vs some of that which hee hath giuen vs. The poore are the Lords collectors, now when the Lord would borrow of vs, shall we make deniall, & send him emptie away? Thirdly, consider that Christ himselfe comes in the person of the poore that is hungrie, sicke, naked, or in any want; and therefore if wee would escape the fearefull sentence of condemnation at the last day, *Away from mee ye cursed into everlasting fire, for I was an hungred, and ye gaue me no meat*, &c. then wee must haue regard vnto the poore, and shew our bountie in their reliefe, who are our owne flesh: so shall wee make God our debtor, and bee commended with this church by Christ himselfe in this world, and at the day of iudgement heare that blessed voyce of his approbation, *Come ye blessed*, Mat. 25. 34.

The third vertue for which this church is commended, is their *faith*. By *faith* here we are to vnderstand *fidelitie*; which is a vertue whereby a man is faithful to God in keeping that vow and promise which hee made to him in his baptisme: which was to renounce and denie himselfe, and wholly to giue vp himselfe to acknowledge one God in three persons; and accordingly to beleue in, to worship and obey the same God all his life long. In this sence is faith taken of *Paul* (a) when he sayth, *That younger widdowes haue damnation, because they haue forsaken their first faith*. And in the former Epistles of

Iam. 1. 27.

(a) 1. Ti. 5. 12

Christ vnto these churches, where hee commands them *to be faithfull.*

The 7th.

It were to bee wished that our churches and congregations, might in like manner be commended for their fidelitie to God: but that cannot truly be done of vs generally. It is a common thing for men to sweare by their faith; but it is a rare thing to find a man to keepe his faith: as will appeare by this short survey of our people: For first, the greatest part in all places are ignorant of God, of his word, & of their vow to him in baptism: and also voyd of care to attaine hereto: Now all these are vnfaithfull vnto God. Others, though they haue knowledge, yet they haue no loue, nor care of good things, which concerne the kingdome of heaven: but al their delight is in eating, drinking, gaming, and in pastimes and pleasures: Herein they spend their time and strength, and these also haue denied their first faith, and their case is dangerous: for as yet their belly and their pleasure is their god, and their end will be damnation. A third sort are termed the wise men of the world; but if we regard their fidelitie to God, there is nothing in them; they are worldly persons and earthly minded, such as spend both wit and strength to get wealth; like vnto the mole, who is alwaies in the earth. These also are vnfaithfull vnto God, in regard of their vow in baptism. For as they account gaine godlinesse, so gold is their god, and they lay to the wedge of gold, Thou art my confidence. Seeing then all these bee vnfaithfull vnto God, wee must hereby bee admonished to remember what wee haue promised in our baptism: And withall haue care to performe the same as wee tender the saluation of our souls. For if wee be vnfaithfull, as *Paul* said of the younger widdowes, damnation belongs vnto vs.

The fourth vertue for which this church is commended, is *patience*. Of this I haue spoken before vers. 2. Here onely note, that it is ioyned with *loue to men*, with *fidelitie to God*, and with *seruice both to God and men in the dutie of loue*. Whereby Christ would signifie that no good thing can bee done by any man, without patience. Loue is no loue without patience: neither is faith any faith without patience: for when a man loueth another

for his loue hee shall sometime receiue hatred. Now vnlesse hee haue patience to beare that hatred, his loue will surcease. And so if a man haue care to be faithfull vnto God, in the world hee shall bee sure to haue much contempt: so that vnlesse he haue patience to beare the same, his faithfulness will faile, *Patience bringeth forth experience, and experience hope, Rom. 5. 4. & Rom. 15. 4.* No comfort of the scriptures, nor hope without patience. And therefore in the parable of the sower, *The good ground (a) bringeth forth fruit with patience*: though a man haue neuer so good gifts, yet without patience he cannot put them in practise. This therefore we must ioine with all the good graces wee haue: as *Peter* counselleth vs, 2. Pet. 1. 6. When a man is in temptation, & apprehendeth the wrath of God, which is the forest thing that can bee, without patience hee will dispaire: Without patience a man will be wearie of wel-doing, both in duties to God & man, & to his owne soule. Hence the Apostle saith, *ye haue need of patience.* Heb. 10. 36.

And thy work. Here Christ repeateth his generall commendation of this church, which we must not thinke to bee done in vaine, but hereby hee would let vs see, how exceeding well hee did approoue of their works. The cause why hee liked them so wel, was their increase in wel-doing: whereof we shall intreat afterward.

Christ repeateth his approbation of *The 7th.* their workes after foure worthy vertues, to shew vnto vs, what things are required in the doing of any worke that shall bee acceptable to God: Namely, these foure things, faith, loue, seruice, and patience. Faith is necessarie, because in well doing a man must testifie his fidelitie to God, which hee shall best doe, if first hee learne out of the word, whether God haue commanded that work to be done or not: that so hee may be sure to do or not to do that which God will haue him: for it is not sufficient to haue a good intent in the doing of our works, as is commonly thought, though falsely; but our workes must bee done in faith, that is, in a sure perswasion out of Gods word, that the things we do are approued of God: for *what soeuer is not of faith is sinne*. Secondly, loue is necessarie in every good worke we go about, *For faith worketh by loue, Gal.*

5. 6. Hence the Apostle saith, 1. Cor. 13. 3. *If a man should give his body to be burned, and bestow all his goods in almes upon the poore: yet if he did not these in love, it would not please God.* Thirdly, service to man is required in our good works. This must be carefully marked: for the end of mans life is in his calling to serve man, and by that to serve God. Col. 3. 24. Servants must obey their masters, and in their persons doe service vnto Christ. And that which is there spoken of servants, must be referred to the works of every man in his calling: they must be done for the good of men, so as god may be served in them. This overthrowes the foolish conceit of the Papists, which thinke that the most excellent works of all are fasting, pilgrimage, wearing of rough attire, and whipping of their bodies: For good works must be done in faith and love, to benefit men, either in soule or body: but these works of theirs are not done in faith, neither do they profit the doers nor any others: Fasting hath it place, yet it is no good worke, but a thing indifferent in it selfe. Lastly, patience is necessary in every good worke, that men faint not in doing that which is good: for they that do any good thing shall be sure of many crosses, partly from men, & partly from Sathan, as also by Gods providence. Now when these befall a man in wel-doing without patience, they will stay his proceeding: And therefore it is truly said, *That the good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience.*

The Vg.

These being the vertues that make a worke acceptable to God: wee must labour in every action of our lawfull calling whatsoeuer it be, to practise the same in faith, love, service, and patience. Wee must not tie good works to church matters only, as hearing the word, and giving almes; but the practise of any worke of a mans lawfull calling bee it neuer so base, with these vertues is a good worke, and approued of God in it kind, as wel as the best worke that is: not for the worke it selfe, but because therein doth appeare faith, love, service, and patience: and because this church so performed their works, therefore doth God double his approbation.

The last vertue for which this church is commended, is increase in godlinesse, in these words, *And thus they are now at the*

last than at the first. The church of Ephesus was before reprobated for decay and losse of the graces of God; but this church did grow & increase in graces, & therefore are her works more approued, than the works of any other church.

It were to be wished, that our congregations might be commended for their increase in godlinesse, in faith, obedience, and other good workes; but that cannot iustly be done, for the number of our people is increased, but their growth in grace doth not appeare. Many liue in ignorance, & though they heare much, yet they profit little, so as it might be said of them, as the author to the Hebrews saith,

(a) *Whereas concerning the time ye ought to be teachers, you haue need again that we teach you the first principles of the word of God.* (a) Heb. 5. 12.

And as Paul saith of certaine women, (b) *They are alwayes learning, & neuer come to the knowledge of the truth.* (b) 1. Tim. 7.

Others also, though they know something, yet they practise lesse than they which know nothing. And which is worst of all, many that heretofore haue had good beginning in them, by their bad conuersation, and the greedie cares of this world haue lost the same againe, & goe backward in knowledge, in obedience, in faith, & love. Rare it is to find those that are like to this church of Thyatira, whose workes are better at the last than at the first. A fearefull case it is, to be ignorant of Gods will, and a great iudgement of God, to decay in love, and other graces: and therefore that we may preuent Gods iudgements, we must haue care to get knowledge, and to increase therein, and with knowledge to ioine obedience in all good duties to God and man. Some plead for themselves by reason of age, want of memory, and capacite: but these must learne to shew forth better affections, and more sincere obedience.

The yonger sort also must imploy their wit and strength to get knowledge, and with knowledge ioine obedience, that they may increase in grace as they grow in dayes. Yea every one that hath any good beginning, must indeuout to make it more: For to him that hath shall more be given, and hee shall haue abundance; but from him that hideth his gift, or abuseth the same, shall bee taken away that which he seemeth to haue, Lu. 8. 18.

N ii

Vcrfe

Verse 20. *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, that thou sufferest that woman Isebel, which calleth her self a Prophetesse, to teach & doctrine my servants, to make them to commit fornication, and to eat meat sacrificed to idols.*

Here is Christs reproofe of this church of Thyatira, and it is twofold: First, of the whole church, in this 20. verse: Secondly, of a woman in that church, vers. 21. In the reproofe of the whole Church note two things: The reproofe it selfe; And the reason thereof. The reproofe it selfe is contained in these words, *Notwithstanding I have something against thee*: that is, though I have praised thee for many worthy works, yet there bee some things which I do not approve. This reproofe hath bin handled in the former Epistles. The reason of the reproofe followeth in these words, *That thou sufferest the woman Isebel, who calleth her selfe a Prophetesse, to teach and seduce my servants.*

This reason of her reproofe containeth sundry points worthy our consideration. I. From the phrase and forme of the words wee may consider the large power that God gave to his Church: which was, besides the power to preach the word, & administer the Sacraments, a further power to appoint who should preach among them, & who should not preach: and also a power to repress e- uill men and euill women, & so to keepe them in order. The like power was giuen to the church of Ephesus, as we haue seene in the Epistle to that church: they had power to discern false Prophets, & Apostles, and to restraints the same. The like power did God giue to all churches, as we shall see if wee read the histories of the churches, & great cause there is hereof: For without this authoritie no church could long stand and be a Church.

II. Here note that it is not sufficient for a church to haue the preaching of the word, but it must haue seuerie and sharpe gouernement, whereby wicked people may be restrained. This church is therefore discommended, for that she vsed not that seuerie authoritie which God had giuen her in suppressing of sin. And in our congregations the like fault is to be found; where much preaching is, yet sinne abounds, as adulterie, blasphemie, vsurie, and crueltie: and the cause

is for that this seuerie execution of gouernment in restraining sinnes, is not so straitly put in practise as it ought to be.

Again, in this reason of his reproofe Christ doth charge them with twofaults: First, for suffering a woman to teach: Secondly, for suffering a woman to seduce his people. For the first, the word translated *teach*, is in the new testament commonly put for publike teaching in the ministratione. Their fault then was this; that they suffered a woman to teach openly: and it is against the word of God, 1. Tim. 2. 12. *I permit not a woman to teach,*

And, 1. Cor. 14. 34. 35. *Women ought to keepe silence in the congregation, and bee subiect to their husbands, and learne of them at home. Obiect.* But Deborah was a Prophetesse, Iud. 4. 4. And Hilda prophesied, 2. Kin. 2. 2. 4. For Iosiah sent to her for counsel, 2. Chr. 34. And therefore women may prophesie.

Answe. These women had extraordinary gifts & calling: and therefore vpon their example wee may not make an ordinarie rule. II. Ob. But it may seeme Paul alloweth it, when he saith, *A woman praying, or prophesying, uncovering her head.* 1. Cor. 11. 5. Answer. Hereto some do answer thus, that in the infancy of the church some women were extraordinarily indued with that gift, & did indeed prophesie. Others iudge it to haue bin a fault in that church, and therefore say, in the 14. chapter, the Apostle reproveth it, commanding women to keepe silence in the churches. Thirdly, a woman may be said to pray, when shee giueth her assent to the prayer of the minister, by saying, *Amen.* And she may be said to prophesie, when shee singeth Psalms or readeth the Scriptures. For so the word is vsed in Scripture, 1. Chr. 25. 1. *Asaph & his company prophesied with harp and cials.* That is (as it is translated) they sung propheties, and plaied thereunto vpon their instruments.

From the rebuke of Christ against this church, we gather that it is not warrantable by Gods word for a woman to administer the Sacrament of baptism. For baptism is a seale of the covenant in the publike ministratione; and so a part thereof, and must go with the preaching of the word, and may not bee administered by women, who are not allowed to preach, no not in time & case of necessity when

The Vse.

Nota B. m. s.

men are wanting. And although they may not teach publicly, yet they may teach at home, and in the absence of their husband it is her dutie to teach her children. *Prou. 31, Lemuel*, that is, *Salomon* is taught many worthy things of his mother. And *Timothie* was brought up of a child in the Scriptures by his grandmother *Lois*, and his mother *Eunice*, 2. Tim. 1. 5.

Hence some would gather, that as a woman may not teach publicly, so shee may not publicly gouerne in the Commonwealth. But this consequence is not good: for publike teaching is flatly forbidden to a woman, so is not publike ciuile regiment. There is speciall reason why she may not publicly teach; for it is the will of God, that as Christ was a man, so they that stand in his roome and stead in the publike ministerie, should also bee men. But the regiment of a kingdome is a ciuile thing, and so may lawfully bee administred by a woman when she commeth vnto it by lawfull succession to her father, whose whole patrimonie in the want of sons shee may rightly enioy. *Obiect.* But the woman must be in subiection vnto the man, 1. Cor. 14. 34. *Ans.* So she may, and yet haue soueraignie in the kingdome. *Obiect.* But the man is the head of the woman, 1. Cor. 11. 3. *Ans.* That is, the man in that hee is a man is a person more excellent than the woman as she is a woman: Yet the person that in regard of sexe is inferiour, may haue more excellent gifts, and so likewise may exercise authoritie and rule: and we find by good experience, that the gouernement of a woman is a happie gouernement; no records of time can shew a more happie regiment for blessings temporall and spirituall vnder any man, than wee haue long enioyed vnder our noble Queene.

The second fault of this Church is, that they suffered a woman *to seduce and teach false doctrine*, and thereby to seduce Gods people. That this is a fault, Christs reproofe sheweth evidently, and therefore I will not stand to proue it.

The Vse. Hence wee may gather, that euerie man is not to bee left to his owne conscience, to teach and hold what doctrine he will: but all such men or women as teach erroneous doctrines, by the gouernors of the Church are to bee restrained. It is a

griuous fault in any Church not to restrain the authors and maintainers of sects and false doctrines, and of opinions which stand not with the trueth of Gods word: and on the contrarie, it is a vertue and a good gift in any church, when they restrain the authors and fauourers of sects and false doctrine. And in this regard our Church is to be commended & approoued, & the commonwealth likewise, for making lawes to restrain both Popish recusants, and some Protestants, who depart from this our church, as beeing no Church of God, but a member of Antichrist and of Babylon.

Now that Christ might aggravat these their offences; hee doth describe both the woman and her teaching. He describeth the woman, first by her propertie, in this name *Iezabel*, that is, 'one like *Iezabel*': secondly, by her action, *Which calleth her selfe a Prophetesse*: her teaching is described in the end of the verse. Touching her property, Christ calleth her *Iezabel* for two causes: First, for that shee was like to *Iezabel*, and in her person reuiued the manners and opinions of *Iezabel*. For as *Iezabel* brought among the Israelites the false worship of the Idol *Baal*: so this woman laboured to bring into this Church of Thyatira, Idolatrie, and other sinnes.

Againe, *Iezabel* was giuen to fornication, as the Scripture recordeth of her by the mouth of *Iehu*, 2. Kings 9. 22. and so was this woman giuen to fornication. Thirdly, *Iezabel* was a woman of authoritie, and by her place and dignitie did countenance & maintaine idolatrie, and her wicked sinnes: so it is like, that this woman was of some place and authoritie, and did thereby countenance her wicked opinions, and damnable sinnes.

In this reason of her name, note first a *The Vse.* notable practise of Sathan for the furtherance of his kingdome, which is this: In succeeding ages hee laboureth to reuiue the erroneous opinions and wicked vices of vngodly persons of former times. This wee see plaine in this place: for long after *Iezabels* death (the wife of *Ahab*, a wicked woman) even in the Apostlestime, he raised vp another woman like *Iezabel* both for wicked life and doctrine. And the like practise hee vseth at this day. In all such as follow the rules and

and counsell of *Machiavel*, is reuiued the craft of *Achitophel*: in the Papiſts are reuiued the opinions and manners of the wicked Scribes and Pharisees: in the recusant Protestants is reuiued the sect of the Donatists, and the sect called Audiani. The familie of Loue reuiues the opinions and manners of the Valentinians and the Montanists, and many other damnable errors. Now this the diuell doth, because he knowes by experience the great hurt that these opinions and finnes haue formerly done vnto Gods Church.

Secondly, Christ calleth this woman *Iezabel*, that he may prouoke this church to a greater detestation of her in regard of her damnable wayes: and that thee might be in as great disgrace with them, as was *Iezabel* in the old Testament to the people of God, that so they might better eschew her wicked seducement. And herein wee haue a good direction for our profitable reading of the bookes of the old and new Testament: namely, that when wee meet with examples of wicked men & wicked women, we must thereby take occasion to be vnlike them. And if wee find our selues like them any way, either in wicked opinion, or in practise, we must therupon grow to a dislike with our selues. Again, finding the examples of good men or good women, wee must labour to conforme our selues thereto, and become like them: and in this regard approoue our selues, when we see our selues conformable vnto the godly in any vertue and grace.

The second argument wherby Christ describeth this woman, is her action: *Shee calleth her selfe a Prophetesse*; that is, shee challengeth her selfe to be one that doth teach Gods wil by the instinct of his spirit. And herein shee became a notable patron of the damnable sect of the Nicolaitans: for she held the lawfulnessse of fornication, and of eating things sacrificed to Idols. And for the maintenance hereof, shee saith shee is a Prophetesse, one that speaketh nothing but as shee is taught by Gods spirit. This is the practise of heretikes, vnder pretence of the spirit to maintaine their damnable deuices, as might easily bee prooued by induction of particular heretikes in former ages.

First, hence then wee are taught to labour to haue the spirit of discerning; whereby we may trie the spirits whether they be of God or not. Many will be of no religion; because there bee so many false teachers, and such diuersitie of opinions in religion. But herein they bewray their profanenesse: they ought the rather to labour for this gift of discerning, whereby to know what is from God, and what is not.

Secondly, hence wee are taught, that when wee are vnjustly slandered, disgraced, or iniured, wee ought not to fret and fume, but by patience to content our selues: for wee see that wicked men to maintaine their wicked opinions and manners, will not stick to abuse God himselfe, and make his blessed spirit the author and patron of their errors and finnes. Wee by our finnes deserue disgrace and reproch: but the spirit of God hath done nothing amisse. And therefore wee must bee patient, beeing in the same condemnation, as *Lu. 23. 40. 41.* and rather reioyce, in as much as wee are partakers of the sufferings of the spirit, *1. Pet. 4. vers. 13.*

Again, here obserue how shee proueth her selfe to be a Prophetesse, namely, by her owne testimonie onely, *She calleth her selfe so*. Where wee may see the note & marke of a false Prophet: to wit, their owne bare word and testimonie. A true Prophet or Prophetesse hath sundry testimonies, besides their own words, to proue the lawfulnessse of their calling: as in the primitiue Church, they had the gift of speaking of diuers languages with out studie, and of working miracles: they had also puritie of doctrine, ioynd with integritie of life; and lastly, many excellent gifts of God, as zeale, courage, and constancie to maintaine the same.

Christ hauing described this woman, for her further disgrace, as also to aggravate the fault of this Church in suffering her, proceedeth to describe her doctrine. And first hee sheweth the end and scope thereof, namely to seduce and to deceiue. Wherein he giueth vs a further note of a false Prophet or Prophetesse, to wit, to teach such doctrine as drawes men to sinne against the first or second Table. True doctrine is according vnto godliness,

ness, and leadeth men thereto; but the end of false doctrine is impietie against God and man: as was shewed by the doctrine of *Balaam*, ver. 14. and such was the doctrine of this woman.

The Vse.

Sundry students now adays are marvellously affected with the sermons, commentaries, and posills of monks and friers. These they prefer before the writings of other godly and sound Divines, which is a lamentable case: for they are in their kind *Iesabells*; the scope of their doctrine is to draw men to errors and transgressions against the law of God; yea, to bring men from heaven to hell. And therefore this exceeding approbation of them is no small offence: being in truth the right way to bring in againe errors, Athesine, & Popery. For turne a Papist from a morall point (wherin he often erreth) and his doctrine and sermons are nothing but false & erroneous: and therefore as Christ would haue this Church to hate the doctrine of this woman, because it did deceiue; so must wee labour to grow in dislike with the commentaries and posills of monks and friers, which tend to that end.

Secondly, Christ setteth forth the end of her doctrine by two arguments: First, by the persons deceiued, *his seruants*: secondly, by the meanes whereby they are deceiued; to wit, *by causing them to commit fornication, and to eat meates sacrificed vnto Idols*.

Touching the persons. Whereas shee deceiued not all men, but the seruants of God (for here is a plaine distinction of men) this encreaseth her fault, because they belonged vnto God. But here two questions may be mooued: First, why some men are the seruants of God, and some are not. Secondly, whether the seruants of God may be seduced by false teachers. To the first some answer, that God would haue all men to be his seruants, and for his part doth all things needfull vnto all men, to make them his seruants; redeeming them, and giuing them sufficient grace hereunto: yet some are not his seruants, because they themselves will not, but wilfully reiect his grace that is offered vnto them. But this doctrine is against common reason, and doth much derogate from the glorie of

God: for hereby they make euery man an emperour, & God an vnderling, subiect vnto man; they make Gods good pleasure to depend vpon mans pleasure, and the accepting of his grace to depend vpon mans wil. But God is the first cause of all things, his will ouerruleth mans will: and therefore it is absurd to say, some men are not Gods seruants, because they themselves will not. The true cause hereof is Gods good pleasure, electing some, and they alone become his seruants because hee hath chosen them. But God did neuer chuse all men first to grace, & then to glorie: & therefore as *Luke* saith, *(a) so many as were ordained to everlasting life, beleueed*. So wee may say: so many as are elected of God to grace and saluation, they become his seruants.

(a) *Act. 13. 48*

The second question. Whether may Gods seruants be seduced by false Prophets? *Ans.* There be two sorts of seruants of God: seruants in appearance, and seruants in truth. Seruants in appearance, are such as outwardly onely embrace the word, and receiue the scales of Gods couenant: and the greatest part of particular churches are such seruants. Now these may fall away and that wholly: and hence it cometh, that whole particular churches may fall away, as did the church of Galatia, and many other: and these are called seruants, because we must in charity iudge, that al which make profession of true religion in Gods church, are the seruants of God. But the true seruants of God, though they may be seduced in part, and for a time, yet they can neither wholly nor finally fall away: for the promise of Christ is to the contrary, *(b) Thou art Peter, and vpon this rocke, that is, the faith which thou professest, wil I build my temple: & the gates of hell shall not preuaile against it*. Which last word (*preuaile*) insinuateth, that the diuell shall shew great malice and strength to vanquish their faith, but yet shall neuer wholly overcome it. And *Matth. 6. 13*. wee are taught to pray, *Lead vs not into temptation*. To be lead into temptation, is wholly to be overcome in temptation, which being a lawful petition, must needs haue Gods promise to graunt the same belonging vnto it. And therefore though Satan may assay to overcome the child of God yet

(b) *Mat. 16. 18*

yet he shall neuer get finall victory ouer him: for true faith purifieth the heart, & cannot stand with a purpose to continue in any one sinne: these two banish each other, sinne brings the child of God vpon his knees; but true faith doth raise him vp againe.

11. point. The meanes whereby shee sought to seduce them, was *by drawing them to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols*. Whereby it is plain, she was a fauourer of the sect of the Nicholaitans: whereof entreatie was made in the foureteenth verse. And thus much for the reproofe of the church.

Verse 21. *And I gaue her space to repent of her fornication, and shee repented not.*

Here Christ reprocueth this woman for her obstinacie and hardnesse of hart, whereby shee went on in sinne without repentance. By *space to repent*, wee are to vnderstand, libertie to liue: for though by her sinnes she deserued present death, temporall and eternall; yet God of his mercy gaue her libertie to liue, that shee might repent.

The Vse.

In her example we are taught what to iudge of that space of time which God giueth vs to liue in this world; namely, that it is a time of repentance: for before a man be borne, and after this life, can none repent: but the time wee now liue, or haue liued, or shall liue, is the onely time allotted for repentance. This point ought seriously to bee considered of all estates, for it doth plainly rebuke the shamefull practise of many at this day, who lead not their life as a time of repentance, but spend it wholly in another course: some in following their vaine pleasures, as carding, dicing, &c. some in heaping vp riches, seeking nothing but temporall profits: others in good fellowship, (as they call it) that is, in company keeping, in eating and drinking. God in iustice might haue cut off these men so soone as they were borne, and yet in mercy he giues them time to repent, to some twentie, to others thirtie, fortie, or fiftie yeares: but they abuse this mercie of God, and in steed of repenting imploy themselves in such workes as are

contrarie thereunto. Their case is most fearefull, they treasure vp to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, & declaration of the iust iudgement of God: like vnto a man that every day for some certaine time, carrieth a faggot for his owne burning in the end.

Secondly, from this end of life all that haue not repented, must learne not to deferre their repentance, but now begin, while it is called to day, and in the exercise thereof spend the whole time of their life. The end of all our endeouours while wee liue, should bee this, to get a roome in the kingdome of God, which wee can neuer haue without repentance.

Next consider, who it is that giues this time of repentance: neither man nor Angell hath this time in his hands, but the power of appointing it belongs vnto Christ alone.

Hereby then all persons whatsoever are to bee admonished, without delay to repent. The young man will take his pleasure in his youth, and repent when hee is old: but hereby he robbeth Christ of his honour, who onely hath power to point out the time of repentance. Vse therefore the time present while thou hast it, and deferre not repentance: for how knowest thou that thou shalt liue to bee old? And though thou dost, yet how canst thou tell whether God will giue thee repentance, considering thou diddest refuse, while hee called for it? Men thinke, that if they dye quietly and peaceably, all is well, they go to heauen straight: but herewith many are deceived; for vnlesse they haue truely repented, they goe straight to the diuell, let their manner of dying bee what it wil. A quiet death is a comfortable thing but no sure signe of grace, because it may come by reason of some easie lingering sicknesse. Considering therefore wee haue no title vnto this grace of repentance, to claime it at our pleasure, it beeing the rare gift of God; nor any lease of our life, but bee meere tenants at will; let vs seeke to turne vnto God with full prayse of heart, while it is called to day: and if wee haue begun, let vs dayly renew this grace to the end of our life.

12. B.

Third-

Thirdly, consider to whome God giues space of repentance: namely, to a wicked woman, as wicked as *Isabell*, Wherein behold the endless mercie of God, that vnto such a wicked person, who blasphemed God, in fathiering her sinnes vpon the spirit of grace, and dishonoured God by seducing his seruants, doth yet vouchsafe a time of repentance: This hath beene and is the dealing of God with most grieuous sinners, *Manasse* was one that sold himselfe to work wickednesse, giuing himselfe to Sorcerie and Idolatrie; and yet vpon his heartie repentance God receiued him to mercie. And *Salomon* fel most fearefully, but yet before his death, we may perswade our selues hee repented and was receiued to mercie: for hee was a pen-man of Scripture, all which were holy men of God, as *Peter* saith, 2. *Pet.* 1. 20. The Israelites were (a) a people of *Sodom* and of *Gomorrab*, as bad as those who are condemned in hel, and yet mercie is offered vnto them vpon their true repentance & conuersion.

(a) Isa. 1. 10.

The vse.

Hereby no man must take occasion to liue in his sinnes: but those that feele themselves laden with the huge burden of their transgressions, haue here a comfort to keepe them from despaire: for if they can humble themselves, and turne vnto Christ, and pray for the pardon of their sinnes, there is yet with the Lord mercie in store, that they may bee saued.

Lastly, Christ saith, *He gaue her space to repent of her fornication*. No doubt shee had many other sins wherof she was to repent, for no sinne goeth alone, but euery capitall sinne draweth many with it: Christ his meaning therefore is not that she should let passe other sins without repentance: but he nameth this one sin of fornication, because it was a principall sinne in her: for she both practised it in her owne bodie, and so made her selfe the stable of the diuell, who should haue beene the temple of Gods holy spirit: and also maintained this sinne, and so drew others thereto. Now speciall and principall repentance must be of principall sins.

The vse.

Here then is a patterne for all sinners how to practise repentance. They must

beginne with their capitall sinnes, which burden their conscience, and whereto they are most addicted, and repent of them. For the man that truly repenteth of one sinne, repenteth of all: for true repentance maketh the heart alike affected to all sinnes: And that heart which is brought to hate his speciall sinnes, will neuer approve of pettie sinnes. This lesson ought carefully to be learned & put in practise: For the repentance of most men is onely in generall, to say wee are all sinners, Lord haue mercie vpon mee, or God forgive me. But this confused repentance is not good, it stands with a purpose to sinne againe. In particular therefore we must search our consciences, and see wherein we haue most dishonoured God, and what sinne hath neereft plunged our soules to the pit of hell; and with that we must beginne to bring our soules to heauen, by repenting truly for the same, and turning from it with al our hearts.

Hence the Papists gather that man hath free will to doe that which is truly good before God, as namely to repent: for say they, *God gaue Isabell space of time to repent*, and therefore shee had power to repent, or else the giuing of that time vnto her had bene in vaine. *Ans.* Their reason is naught: it followeth not because God gaue her time to repent, therefore she had power of her selfe to repent: as will easily appeare, if wee consider the ends for which God giues men space & time of repentance, and commandment so to do. The ends are two. I. That in that time of repentance, which hee alloteth to men, hee may giue his children grace, whereby they may be enabled to obey his commandment and to repent: for the Lord vseth the commandments and threatnings of the law, and the promises of the gospel as outward meanes of giuing grace vnto men by the worke of his spirit. II. He giueth commandment and time to repent, that men may see what they should doe, not what they can doe: and that the wicked may bee without excuse at the day of iudgement, and be ashamed of their slauerie & bondage vnto sinne in this life.

And she repented not. Here the sinne of *Isabell*, is expressed, namely, her impeni-

tencie

tencie and hardnesse of heart. Whereby without remorse shee liued in her fornication and idolatrie: For the vnderstanding of this her sinne, two points are to be considered. I. Where this sinne of impenitencie is forbidden in Gods word. II. What is the greatnesse of this sinne: for the first, there bee two parts of Gods word, the Law, and the Gospell, which must not be confounded, but distinguished, or els wee shall ouerturne manie points of Christian religion. The law giues commaundement touching things that were by nature in Adam before his fall, forbidding those things which are contrarie to those vertues which were in his perfect nature. But the gospell commands, & forbids things that are aboue nature, and in that part of Gods word is the sinne of impenitencie forbidden; for the law condemnes no more than it reuealeth, but it neuer reuealed repentance, and therefore it doth not forbid or condemne the want thereof. Secondly, for the greatnesse of this sinne, it may appeare, because hereby men heape sin vpon sinne, and (a) *Wrath vnto thinselves against the day of wrath.* Some to aggrauat the grieuoufnesse of this sinne, say that impenitencie is the sin against the holy ghost: and that opinion is antient, but yet false and erroneous, for the sinne against the holy ghost is a blasphemy, Mat. 12. 31. but this is not a blasphemy. Again the sinne against the holy ghost is in this life, but finall impenitencie is neuer before the end of this life.

The vs.

Hence also the Papists gather free will to good by nature: shee did not repent, therefore shee had freewill & power to repent if she would. *Ans.* This reason is not good: thus much may hence be gathered, that shee had freewill not to repent, and to sin: for euery man sinneth freely, but yet it followeth not, that they haue the same power to cease from sin, or to repent without Gods special grace, without which no man can will or doe that which is truly good before God.

Againe, the same sinne which is reproued in this wicked woman, may bee laid to the charge of the greatest number in our churches and congregations: god hath giuen vnto men a long time of repentance, to some ten, to some twenty

yeares, but they repent not, as their liues doe plainly testifie: for some liue in irreligion and prephanesle, some in Sabbath breaking, some in fornication and adulterie, some in idlenesse, some in couetousnesse and extortion, giuing themselves wholly and spending all their time in seeking the things of this life, neuer regarding with reuerence the things of God.

Vers. 22. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit fornication with her into great affliction, except they repent them of their works.

Christ having reproued this church and this woman for their seuerall faults doth here giue speciall counsell and direction vnto them both, whereby they may auoid & escape the grieuous iudgements due vnto them for their sinnes, both in this life, and in the life to come. This counsell of Christ hath two parts: First to *Iesabel* and her company, vers. 22. 23. The second to the church of Thyatira, vers. 24. 25. The summe of Christs counsell to *Iesabel* is, *repent*: which is not exprest, but in steed thereof the reason to moue her to repentance is propounded. And it may be framed thus, *If thou repent not I will punish thee with sundry iudgements*: But thou wouldest not be so punished, and therefore repent.

This reason hath two parts, A threatening: and an exposition thereof. The threatening in these word, *I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit fornication with her into great affliction.* And before this threatening, Christ prefixeth a word of attention (*Behold*) whereby hee would teach them and vs, that wee ought seriously to consider of the threatnings that are propounded in Gods word against sinne and sinners. When *Iosias* heard the booke of the law read, *his heart* (b) *melted*: (b) *Ki. 2. 2. 19.* which it could neuer haue done vnlesse it had first trembled at the iudgements therein denounced. And the pricking that was wrought in the hearts of the Iewes, (c) by *Peters* first Sermon, was nothing els but a compunction wrought in them vpon consideration of the iudgements and condemnation due vnto them for crucifying the Lord of life. The cause

N.B.

(a) Rom. 3. 5

N.B.

(c) Act. 2. 37.

cause why sinne is so rife in euerie estate and condition of men at this day is, for that men set light by the threatnings of Gods word. If men would tremble when they heare of Gods iudgements, it would make them crie out, *Men and brethren what shall wee doe*: but because God is mercifull, therefore men feare him not, *Ifay 57. 17.*

This threatening hath three seuerall parts according to the three seuerall sorts of persons whom it concerneth. The I. is against *Isabel* her selfe, who was the chiefe of them all, in these words, *I will cast her into a bed.* The meaning whereof may be gathered out of the like words of *Ionadab to Ammon*, bidding him *(a) lye downe on his bed, and make himselfe sicke.* So that Christs meaning is, that he will strike her with some grievous sicknes: the place for the sick person being put for the sicknesse it selfe: As if he should say, *Isabel* takes her pleasure in fornication, and thereto abuseth the bed, I will therefore send on her some great sicknesse which shall cast her into her bed.

The V^{se}.

Here note Gods dealing with sinners: In those things which they abuse for the furtherance of their sinnes, will the Lord plague & punish them. *Isabel* abused her bed with fornication, & thither shee must bee cast with sicknesse: *Dines* in his life time abused his tongue and tast by gluttonie, and therefore is hee now in hell, therein most of all plagued and tormented, as his crying *(b) for a drop of water to coole his tongue*, doth import: gamesters take their pleasures in carding and dicing, which many times God turneth to their woe; for thereby they are vsually brought to extreame want and miserie. *Ahab* shed *Naboths* blood to get his vineyard, and for that sinne must *(c) his blood, the blood of Isabel, and his children, be shed.* And now in these dayes the covetous for their gaine doe sucke the blood of the poore, but that blood will haue blood from them againe, *The Lord will spoyle the soule of him that spoyleth the poore, Prov. 22. 23.* This must make vs to beware how we abuse any creature of God to serue vs for any sinne: for the Lord will cause that to be a meanes of woe and punishment vnto vs, which we misuse vn-

to our lusts.

Againe, note here who is the author of greuous sickneses, namely, Christ himselfe: For he saith, *I will cast her into a bed.* Sickneses come not by chaunce or fortune, but from the hand of God. This wee must learne to beleue, and it will cause vs to make better vse of sickneses than vsually we do: If men did beleue this, it would make the hardest heart to repent in time of sicknesse: for this they would say: Hath God cast mee downe with sicknesse? no doubt it is to humble me for some of my sinnes, to make mee know them, to leaue them, and to turne vnto him. This vse the seruants of God haue made hereof, *(d)* when the Prophet came to *Hezekias*, & told him he should dy, he turned his face to the wall and wept, as for other things, so for his sinnes, especially. And *Isaac* being to die, *(e) leaned on his staffe, & by faith worshipped towards the beds head*, lifting vp his body to doe reuerence vnto God, thereby testifying his humilitie, faith, and hope. And the like ought we to do, which if wee could, wee should find our sicknesse would become a blessing vnto vs.

The second part of Christs threatening is the punishment of her followers, which receiued her doctrine, & committed fornication with her, *They must bee cast into great affliction.*

First, this must teach all persons, that it is a diuellish speech to thinke and say, that fornication is but a *tricke and slip of youth*: for great affliction is the punishment of this sinne, which notably argueth the hainousnesse thereof.

Secondly, hence we may gather some of the causes, why townes and kingdoms are afflicted with greuous wars, famine, and pestilence: among the rest these are two, fornication, & embracing of errorrs and superstition. Sodome for fornication and other sinnes was burnt with fire and brimston from heauen: the *Israelites* *(f)* for this sin suffered most greuous afflictions: And among the *Corinthians*, for comming to the Lords table in this sin, among others, *(g) many were sick, many weak, and many slept.* And this land of ours hath beene afflicted with famine and pestilence, as for other sinnes, so for

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(a) 1. Sa. 13. 5.

(d) Isa. 38. 2.

(e) Heb. 11. 21

(b) Luce 16. 24.

(c) 1. Kin. 21. 23, 24.

The V^{se}.

(f) Num. 15. 2.

(g) 1. Cor. 11. 30. with cap. 6. 18. & 10. 2.

fornication; which in time of peace is multiplied, and so wil continue til it draw vpon vs bloudshed also and great afflictions: For that which is said of the followers of *Isabel*, must bee verified of all that lue in the like finnes.

The second part of the reason is, the exception of these comminations: *except they repent them of their works*. Where we may see: First, that all the threatnings of Gods iudgements and of eternall destruction, must bee vnderstood, with the exception of repentance. Whence also this followeth, that men of yeares living in the church, are not so much condemned for other particular sins, as for living in their finnes without repentance: euerie sin makes a man subiect to damnation, but it is this impenitency that brings vpon them actual damnation. Want of repentance for sin is more dangerous than the sin it selfe; the consideration whereof, must teach vs not to lie in sin, though we haue committed it, but turne to God by speedy repentance: for it is the continuance in sinne without repentance that casteth the soule to hell. When thou shalt turne from thy sinne by true repentance, thou art free from the threatening and the curse of sinne: For they admitting the exception of true repentance, *ser. 18.8.*

Further obserue, how this exception of repentance is placed between two threatnings of iudgements, which sheweth how God mingleth his iudgements with mercie, hee sheweth not wholly either iustice or mercy, but tempereth them together in all the works that concerne mans saluation.

Thirdly, here note that repentance preuents not onely eternall damnation, but also temporall iudgements, as greivous sicknesses, and other plagues and afflictions. This point may haue special vse among vs: We haue by Gods mercie enioyed his gospell with long peace, but for our abuse thereof wee may iustly feare it shall be taken from vs; and if we would escape that iudgement wee must repent both high and low.

Of their works. That is, of their idolatrie and fornication, where hee sheweth of what things true repentance must be, namely, of bad workes in particular,

whereto men giue themselves: every man that would truly repent must consider of his particular faults: The drunkerd in particular of his drunkenness, and the couetous man of his couetousnesse: and instead of iniuries and hard dealing shew mercy vnto the poore. The common repentance of the world that is done in generall, is nothing but a visard of repentance, and yet it is all that is vsed of the greatest part of our people: for they wil come to heare the word, and to receiue the Sacraments, and in generall confesse themselves to be sinners, and then they thinke they haue done ynough: But true repentance is of particular sins: As *Dauid* *Psal. 51.* cried out of blood guiltines.

Vers. 23. And I will kill her children with death, and all the Churches shall know that I am hee which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will giue vnto euery one of you according to his works.

Here is the third part of Christs threatening against *Isabels* children: by children we are to vnderstand properly, those which are borne of her, and were of her household, and not her followers, for they were threatned with greivous afflictions in the former verse. It had bin sufficient to haue said, I will kill her children. But to note the certaintie & greivousnesse of this punishment, he saith, I will kill them (with death.) *Quest.* How can this stand with the iustice of God, to punish the offences of the parents in the person of the children? *Ans.* God dealeth so for temporall punishments, not for eternall.

And though wee could not perceiue the iustice of God in so doing, yet wee must reuerence the same, blaming our owne ignorance. Albeit, euen in reason wee may conceiue of the equitie of this course: for societies, as church, commonwealth, and families, are Gods ordinance, and the parties in them must be considered, as members of those societies: so God conceiuech of them when he inflicteth the punishment deserued by one, vpon another; as of the Prince vpon the people, of the parents vpon their children. This hee may iustly doe by reason of that neere bond which is betweene the

the members of the same societie: like as in the naturall bodie when the stomacke is distempered, the head aketh: and when the head is wounded the stomacke is sick; and the bodie may be smitten for the errors of the tongue. Thus when *David* sinned the child died, and when hee numbred the Israelites, the people were plagued. And thus is the child stained in bloud for the fathers treason against earthly Princes: and so God punished this woman in her children, that shee might know the greatnesse of her finnes, hee smote her children with death.

The 7th.

Hence parents are taught to make conscience of every sinne: for thereby they may bring iudgements vpon their children and familie euen to death. Now what bloudie hearted parents are those that will make no conscience of dooing that whereby they bring vengeance vpon their owne children? And by the same reason must every man that liues in any societie be admonished to take heed of sinne: because thereby a man (especially if hee bee a principall member of a societie) may bring destruction vpon many: As *David* did by numbring the people: And *Achan* by his couctous stealth, *Iosua* 7. And *Abah* vpon his posteritie. So that impenitent persons which will not be reformed but go on in sinne, ought to bee banished both from church and commonwealth; as hurtfull members, yea enemies to all good societies.

That these threatnings might take place in the hearts of *Iesabel* and her followers, Christ remooueth two carnall conceits, whereby they might thinke to delude or escape these iudgements threatned. The first is this, *Iesabel* and her companie might thinke that their practises were secret, not knowne to the world; and therefore they were not in danger of Gods iudgements: This is a wicked imagination that comes into the mind of all sinners; but this Christ cuts off, saying, *And all the Churches shall know that I am hee which search the reins and the hearts*: As if he should say to *Iesabel* and her companie: you may persuade your selues that because your finnes are so

cret, therefore my iudgements shall not befall you. But know, that I will discover your secret sins and practises in such sort, as all Churches shall know by experience in your persons, that I doe see and discern the most hidden thoughts of mans heart.

First, here obserue to whom Christ will discover their finnes; not to all the world, but to the Church of God, *All Churches shall know*: This Christ doth to testify *Iesabel* & her company: For as it is an excellent honour to bee well esteemed of with the Churches of God, so it is a most shamefull dishonour to be in disgrace with the Churches of God: For (a) *what secret is bound or loosed by the Church on earth, that same is bound or loosed in heauen*. And therefore by due proportion it followeth, that they which are in disgrace with Gods Churches on earth, are also in disgrace with God himselfe in heauen.

(a) Mat. 18.

Hence wee are taught that howsoever we must (so much as in vs lieth) endeavour to approoue our selues to the whole word, yet especially wee must labour to bee in good account with the Churches of God, and the members thereof: And on the contrarie, wee must continually auoid the dooing of all such things as may iustly bring vs into disgrace with the Church of God, *Rom. 16.16. The churches of Christ salute you. And 1. Cor. 16.19. All the churches of Asia salute you*. Where the Apostle meaneth not, that they did by word of mouth send greetings vnto them: But hereby he would signifie that all Churches did approoue of them, which he saith for their great comfort. *Paul* received *Timothie* into the company, *because the churches haue him a good report*, *Act. 16.2.3.*

But what is the thing that all churches should know by experience in the persons of *Iesabel* and her company? namely, that Christ is hee which doth indeed search thereins and the hearts: where, by *Reynes* and *hearts* we must vnderstand the same things, namely, the thoughts and affections of men: for in that sense those words are often vsed in the old Testament. *Quoth* How can reins signify the thoughts and affections, see-

ing the thoughts are seated in the braine, and the affections in the heart? *Answer.* The reynes are put forthie thoughts and affections, not because they are seated therein, but that resemblance and analogie that is betweene them: for as the reynes are seated in the most secret part of the bodie, so the thoughts and affections are seated in the most secret place of the soule: and the heart is put for the thoughts and affections, first, because the affections are there seated; secondly, because the thoughts, though they bee seated in the braine, yet they haue their operation in the heart: for ioyfull thoughts make a merry heart, and fearefull thoughts an heauie heart. Again, the word (*Search*) signifieth a most narrow search, and such a one as goeth with finding; thereby shewing that nothing is so secret in man, but the Lord both can and doth see and discern the same.

The 7th.

Hence wee learne first, that Christ our Saviour is not onely man, but verie God, one person standing of two natures. That Christ is man, heretikes deny not: but whether he bee God or not, there is the question. Which yet is here evidently prooued: for hee that hath in him the peculiar properties of God, must needs bee God: But Christ hath in him the true properties of God, hee can search and discern all the thoughts, and all the affections of the hearts of all men, which none can doe but God onely: *1 Cor. 17. 9. 10. The heart is deceitfull & wicked about all things; who can know it? (The Lord search the hart, and trie the reins.)* And therefore Christ is the true and verie God.

Secondly, hereby we are taught to beware and take heed of hypocrisie in all things, but especially in the matters of religion. Hypocrisie is, when a man seemeth outwardly to be that which he is not inwardly. But we must haue care to be truly in heart that which we appeare to bee in life and profession: wee must come as neere Christ in thought and affection, as in our outward action: for Christ knowes as well the whole estate of euery mans reynes and heart, as hee doth their speeches and their deeds.

Thirdly, hereby wee must learne to suspect our selues of our vnkowne sins, as of our vnbeleefe and presumption; not contenting our selues with an acknowledgement of our knowne sinnes, for wee can neuer discern the depth of our corrupt heart; and yet God knoweth them. This was *Dauids* practise, (a) after due examination of himselfe hee yet cryeth; *Lord cleanse me from my secret finnes:* As if he should say, I haue O Lord searched my heart, but I cannot sufficiently know mine owne corruptions, therefore doe thou O Lord helpe to cleanse mee from them. If this were practised, true religion would flourish: for many iustifie themselves, when as they know not what is in their hearts, little considering what Christ sayth vnto the Pharisees, (b) *You are they which iustifie your selues before men; but Christ knoweth your hearts.*

And I will giue to euery one of you according to your works. Here Christ proceedeth to remouue a second wicked conceit, whereby they might seeme to illude Gods iudgements threatened. For they might say, Let the Lord send iudgements and plagues vpon vs, yet we shal escape them: as *Isay* said of the wicked in his time, *That they made a league with death and hell, and said the iudgements of God shall passe ouer them.* *Isay 28. ver. 15.* But to cut off this vaine conceit, Christ threatneth a iust reward to euery one, according to his works. As if he should say; You may sooth vp your selues, and falsly thinke, that you shall escape my iudgements: but know it, that I will reward euery one of you partly in this life, and principally at the day of iudgement, according to your works, bee they good or bad. For these words must especially bee vnderstood of the day of iudgement, as they are vsed, *Rom. 2. 6* and *Rom. 12. 12.* *Now you shall be rewarded according to your works.* Hence the Papists gather, that men are saved not onely by faith in Christ, but also by workes: for this they reason; By that whereby wee must bee iudged, must wee bee iustified and saved: but by workes wee must bee iudged, and therefore saved. *Answer.* The Proposition is false: There is great difference

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rence betwene iustifying and iudging: for iudging is onely the declaration of a man to bee iust; but iustification is the making of a man iust: And because the declaration of a man to bee iust, is by works, therefore is iudgement by works. Again, it is not said, I will give to you for your works; but according to

your works: If he had said, I will give to every one of you for your works, then it might have seemed they had bene iustified by them: But here Christ doth onely make works an outward signe or rule, whereto he wil conform and square the last iudgement.

Secondly, whereas every man must bee iudged, that is, saued or condemned according to his works; hence wee may gather, that good works are necessarie to saluation; yet not as causes thereof, either efficient, or helping any way, but onely as a way or meanes to come vnto saluation: For faith is necessarie, and good works are the tokens and fruits of faith, and so are necessarie.

Thirdly, here wee must bee admonished to bee carefull to abound in good works; not to win heauen by them, but to get assurance of saluation in our selues. And these good works are the dooing of the duties of pietie vnto God, and of charitie vnto our brethren, even the duties of the Morall law; or more plainly, the dooing of the generall duties of a Christian, and the particular duties of a mans calling: for if these bee done in obedience to God and to his glorie, proceeding from faith and loue vnto our brethren, though the calling be neuer so base, they are good works. And on the contrarie, this must admonish vs to make conscience of euery euill way: for sinnes be the markes of condemnation: and so many wicked works as we commit, so many markes and brands doe we set vpon our selues of our iust and deserved condemnation, vnlesse wee repent.

Lastly, hence wee may gather, that there bee degrees of ioy in heauen, and of torments in hell. For iudgements and rewards goe according to mens works: And therefore they that testifie their

faith by great and many good works, shall haue great reward: they that testifie their faith by lesser and fewer works, shall haue lesser reward: and so for sinnes, the more haynous they be, the deeper condemnation they do procure.

Verf. 4. And to you I say, the rest of them of Thyatira, as many as haue not this learning, neither haue knowen the deepnesse of Sathans (as they speake) I will put vpon you none other burden.

25. But that which you haue alreadie bold fast till I come.

Here Christ commeth to a second part of his counsell, which concernes the Angell, and the better part of this Church of Thyatira: and first he beginneth with the Preface of this counsell; wherein wee may obserue two points: First, who speaketh: Secondly, to whom hee speaketh. For the first, hee that speaketh is Christ: I say, hereby Christ challengeth vnto himselfe the absolute and all sufficient authoritie of the supreme Doctor of his Church, in that hee speaketh in his owne name. Whereby hee putteth a plaine difference betwene himselfe and all other his ministers, either Prophets, Apostles, or ordinarie teachers: for they must not propound any thing vnto Gods people in their owne names, but in the name of Christ. But Christ teacheth in his owne name, beeing the fountaine of all diuine knowledge and vnderstanding, that is reuealed in the word of God. And thus Christ himselfe speaketh in his owne name, to strike the hearts of the Angell of this Church and the better part thereof, with reuerence, and to moue them to receiue and obey the counsell following, considering it comes immediately from Christ, the Doctor of the Church.

II. point. The parties to whom hee speaketh, To you: that is, the Angell and the better part of this Church: for so Christ expounds it in the words following, though first hee say in generall To you: that is, The rest of them of Thyatira.

When as Christ will behaue himselfe Lord gaue to *Moses* a most plaine and as the doctōr and chiefe Angell of this Church, note, that he maketh a distinction of the persons in the Church, and also diuideth his counsell, giuing one doctrine and one iudgement to one part, and a diuers doctrine and iudgement to another.

The V^{se}.

This giueth vs good direction for sundry actions: for some may aske, how must doctrine bee deliuered in a mixt congregation, where some are Papists, some Protestants, some are hardened, others dispaire? *Ans^{we}.* The persons must bee distinguished after the example of Christ, and sutable doctrines diuided for them, that euerie one may haue his due. Impenitent sinners must be terrified, and threatenings deliuered against them, with exception of them that repent: Comforts must be propounded & applied to them that despaire, with restraint from all impenitent persons that go on in sinne.

If any demaund more particularly, who these bee whom Christ calleth *The rest of them of Thyatira*, Christ answers directly (as the words import) *to as many as haue not this learning, neither haue knowne the deepnesse of Sathan*. Where Christ giueth two notes whereby to discerne who bee the rest of them of Thyatira: The first is, the not receiuing or maintaining of the false doctrine of *Iesabel*, whereof entreatie hath bene formerly made: The second note is, ignorance in the deepnesse of Sathan, *neither haue knowne the deepnesse of Sathan*: that is, neither haue acknowledged nor approoued the doctrine of *Iesabel*, which is the deepe and profound learning, as themselves doe iudge.

In this obserue a most wicked practise of *Iesabel* and her followers: they esteemed highly of their owne opinions, calling them profound and deepe learning: but for the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles in the old & new Testaments, in it there was no such matter. This in all ages hath bene the practise of wicked persons, highly to esteeme their owne conceits, and basely to neglect the word of God. The teachers of the Iewes do hold to this day, That the

Lord gaue to *Moses* a most plaine and easie law which he deliuered to his people; but the most secret and profound doctrine was vnwritten, shewed to *Moses* by reuelation, and by him deliuered to the Priests and Leuites, which they keepe still in their Cabbala. And of the like iudgement touching Scripture are the Popish Churches. The Word written is but an inkie word, a dead letter, or a nose of waxe: but the most perfect Scripture is vnwritten; which is, the consent of faith and of doctrine in the hearts of all Catholikes. And by such great tearmes the Anabaptists, Libertines, and Arrians, maintaine their doctrine, and abuse Scripture, calling the written Word milke for euerie nouice, but the consent of heart among themselves, with reuelations, that is the strong meats. Yea, this opinion hath crept in among vs in part: men thinke basely of Scripture, and preferre other mens writings before it. For let a man preach plainly the bare word of God, and deliuer doctrines and exhortations out of the same, this is but plaine preaching: But let another come and viter his mind partly in Latine, and partly in Greeke, and other languages, alleading withall the testimonies of Fathers, Counsels, and other Writers: that is the learned preaching. And thus doe most men abuse Scripture, and exalt the writings of men aboue it. But seeing this is the practise of *Iesabel* and wicked men, let vs on the contrarie learne to reuerence the written word, and giue place thereto aboue all the testimonies and sayings of men whatsoeuer.

The deepnesse of Sathan. As if he should say: They count it deepe learning; but it is the learning of the diuell, wherein you may see his profound craft and policie. Where note, that when Christ will alleadge the speech of *Iesabel* and her followers, he doth it with disgrace vnto them: for they counted their doctrine deepe learning; but Christ repeating their opinion, calleth it the *deepnesse of Sathan*.

Hence I gather, that Christians cannot safely act and play the Comedies of heathen men: for they are full of many blas-

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Blasphemous speeches and oathes flat against the word of God: which they ought not to repeat, but with disgrace vnto them. For Christs practise must be a patterne for our imitation: hee would not repeat so much as one word of a wicked woman, without some note of disgrace. If it bee said: they repeat these speeches with disgrace and dislike: I answer, it is not so: for if they did, that would take away the whole Comedie, being full of such bad speeches. And this I take to bee the equitie of Gods word, thus to reason from Christs example.

As they speake. These words Christ addeth: First, to shew that the words going before were not his owne, but the words of *Isabels* followers touching her doctrine. Secondly, to shew the proud and presumptuous minds of heretikes, in maintaining their wicked opinions. Thus haue false teachers vpheld their errors by proud and swelling words, as *Iude* the 16. & *1. Pet.* 2. 18. The pure word of God is not so maintained; but in the humilitie and lowliness of spirit, and in the practise of pietie from an humble heart: for God teacheth the lowly his wayes, and giueth grace to the humble, *Psal.* 25. 14. And therefore this is a note of false doctrine, by swelling words to maintaine the same.

Hitherto we haue spoken of the Preface before Christs counsell: now followeth the counsell it selfe in this sentence: *Though I lay no other burden vpon you, yet I would haue you to hold fast that which you haue already till I come.* This sentence is a distinction, containing two parts: First, in these words, *I will lay no other burden vpon you, than that which you haue already:* that is, howsoever I threaten my iudgements vnto *Isabel* and her followers, yet I will lay none other punishment vpon you but my reproofe onely, for suffering *Isabel* among you with her false doctrine and followers.

This branch of this distinction containeth a most comfortable instruction: namely, that all those that giue themselves to maintaine puritie of doctrine and sinceritie of life shall bee safely preserved in the time of common iudgements,

vnder the blessed protection of God, so farre forth as is for Gods glory and their good. And considering this mercie is offered to the godly, wee must hereby learne to become followers of this church of *Thyatira*: that is, wee must endeavour to maintaine the pure truth of Gods holy word, and withall haue care to shew forth sinceritie of manners, in making conscience of euerie sinne, and endeavouring our selues to walke in al the wayes of Gods commandements with cheerefulness. Hereby we shall get protection from common iudgements, when they are laid vpon the wicked: but if wee partake with the wicked in their sinnes, wee shall receiue part in their plagues.

The second part of this distinction is in these words: *But that which you haue already hold fast till I come:* that is, mine Apostles haue deliuered vnto you the pure & sound doctrine of saluation; now I charge you that you hold that fast, and maintaine it vntill I come to iudgement. Here is a plain and most excellent commandement, containing speciall instruction meet for this Church of *Thyatira*, and all Churches. Before, our Sauour Christ had commended this church for not approouing the doctrine of *Isabel* and her companie: but here hee giueth them another commandement, To hold fast the true doctrine of Christ, taught them by his Apostles. Whereby he would teach them, and in them all churches, to content themselves with the pure doctrine of the Apostles, and not to affect or approoue any other doctrine besides whatsoever: According as *Paul* biddeth the Galatians, *(a) though wee, or an Angell from heauen, preach vnto you any other doctrine than that which we haue preached vnto you let him be accursed.*

By the light of this commandement wee are directed in sundry duties. First, not to regard vnto written traditions, which the church of Rome doth so highly magnifie, for it cannot be proved that the Apostles euer taught them.

Secondly, not to regard the doctrines of men, which some bring vnto vs vnder colour of Revelation from God since the Apostles times.

Thirdly,

Ver. 22.

(a) Gal. 1. 8.

The use.

Thirdly, hereby wee learne what to thinke and iudge of the three great religions of the Turkes, the Iewes, and Papists at this day. The Turkish religion is not to be regarded: for it had it beginning sixe hundred yeares after the Apostles time, with whose doctrine onely we must content our selues. Also the Iewish religion we must not regard, for they reject the doctrine of the Apostles. And the religion of the Papists we must renounce, because it is not of the Apostles teaching, but had it beginning by little and little long after their times. If this commandement were safely kept, which is laid on this Church, men would not be of so many religions: but all would bee of one religion, cleaving fast to the doctrine of the Apostles, and contenting themselves with it, which is the true rule for reformation of life, and the right way to attaine saluation.

Lastly, here is a rule and direction for those which will bee of no religion, because of the diuersitie of opinions touching the same. They must haue recourse to the doctrine of the Apostles, and content themselves therewith, nothing regarding new doctrines, bee they neuer so glorious.

Till I come. Here Christ sheweth how long the doctrine of the Apostles must bee held fast: namely, not for a short time, but till his second coming to iudgement. Whereby wee learne, that it is the dutie of Gods Church to preserve and maintaine the puritie of true religion vnto the end of the world. This is no small matter: but a most needfull dutie enioyned vnto vs by speciall commaundement, and withall a matter of great consequence: for the puritie of religion is the foundation and marke of the Church, and the right way to direct mens soules to eternall life. For this cause Paul chargeth *Timothie*, (a) *To keepe the true patternes of wholesome words, & to continue in the things which hee had learned.* And in regard of this dutie, the church is called, *The pillar and ground of truth.* And Christ for this cause gaue to his Church both Pastors and Teachers: Pastors to instruct in righteousnesse, for the maintenance of puritie in manners:

and Teachers to maintaine the puritie of doctrine in soundnesse of iudgement.

This therefore must admonish vs, that wee haue care not onely to learne religion in our owne persons, but also to conuey the same to ages following, that the puritie thereof may bee preserved to the coming of Christ. This dutie especially concernes the preachers of the Gospell, they should teach the truth, and confute errors, and beat downe false doctrines, which poison the truth of God. If in the night season a man set vp a false light in the haue, all the ships that are coming, to land are in danger of shipwracke. So in Gods Church, if the bright light of pure religion bee not set vp and aduanced, the soules of men are cast into the gulfe of hell. The want of care in performing this dutie, is the cause why God sends heresies and Apostasies into his Church. Thus came in the Apostasie of Antichrist, 2. *Thess.* 2. 10. 11. *Because men loved not the truth.* And so no doubt will the Lord deale with vs, if wee haue not care to maintaine the puritie of Apostolicall doctrine.

Verse 26. *For hee that overcometh and keepeth my workes vnto the end, to him will I giue power ouer nations.*

27. *And hee shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall they bee broken.*

28. *Even as I receiued of my father, so will I giue him the morning starre.*

29. *Let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith to the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts: First, a promise, verse 26. 27. 28. Secondly, a commaundement, verse 29. In the promise note two things: the parties to whom it is made, and the benefit promised. The parties to whom, *are euery one that overcometh*; whom Christ describeth by a propertie of sincere obedience, *To keepe his workes vnto the end.*

Here then wee haue a description of true obedience. First, the forme thereof consisteth in *observing the workes of Christ*: which we must not vnderstand, of doing them

(a) 1. Tim. 1. 23. & 3. 14.

1. Tim. 3. 15.

Ephes. 4. 11.

them according to the rigor of the law, but of a purpose and endeavour to keepe them. For this is a privilege belonging to all that are in Christ, that God accepteth their wils and endeavour of obedience, for perfect obedience it selfe. This wee must know and hold for truth, for many haue but little knowledge, & thereupon are driven to despaire: yet they must know for their comfort, that if they haue care to get more knowledge, and make conscience to obey that which they know, then they are keepers of the works of Christ, and shall haue the reward promised.

Secondly, obedience is here described by the object or matter thereof, to wit, *the works of Christ*: that is, all such works as Christ hath ordained in his word, and those whereof he is the author by his spirit in his members.

The V. 26.

Hereby we learne: first, that hee that will obey God in Christ Iesus, must not thinke his owne thoughts, speake his owne words, nor do his owne deeds; but he must thinke, speake, & do that which Christ would haue him: Secondly, that no worke is, or can bee acceptable to Christ, but that which is ordained by him. *1st* (a) complaineth of them *that would teach the feare of God by mens commandments*: so that there is no true feare of God, but that which is taught by Gods commandments: & the like may be said of all other our obedience. This rule ouerthroweth all other religions besides the true religion, as of the Iewes, Turkes, and Papists: For almost all their works are of mens inuention, and were neuer ordained by Christ: such are most points in Popery, as saying of Masse, going on pilgrimage, fastings, vowing, and praying to Saints, &c.

Thirdly, whereas he saith, *my works*, meaning not one or two, but all his workes; wee learne that true obedience consisteth in doing all the workes of Christ: For Christ and the diuel wil neuer part stakes, God must either haue all our workes or none: And therefore *David* saith, *I shall not be confounded, because (b) I haue respect vnto all thy commandments.* And good king *Iosias* is commended, *For*

(b) *Psalm 119. 6*

(c) *2. Kings 23. 25*

thus he turned to the Lord according to (c) all

the law of Moses. This point must be learned of all: For many think if they do many good things with (d) *Herod*, all is well; & for this cause many a man abhors couetousnesse & pride, and yet is a contemner of the Gospell: But true obedience must bee in all things.

Vnto the end. Here is the fourth branch of true obedience, it is constant. That obedience which Christ will reward must not be for a day or a yere: but from time to time through the whole course of our life to the end of our daies. And thus wee must iudge of obedience; not by some particular actions, but by the whole tenour of a mans life. Put case a man hath inade conscience of all his waies, through the whole course of his life, and yet in sicknesse by reason of the extremitie thereof is distracted, and raueeth, blaspheming God, and so dyeth; What must we iudge of this man? Surely, we must not censure him by his behauiour in his sicknesse, but consider what hath bene the tenour of his life; if that haue bene vpright, then his obedience was good, and shall bee rewarded.

II. Point. The benefits promised: and they are two. The first is, power to rule; *verse. 27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: And as the vessels of a potter shall they bee broken: euen as I receiued of my father.* The second is the morning star, *verse. 28: Euen as I haue receiued of my father,* are referred amisse in our English translation, to the giuing of the morning starre, when as they properly belong to the former words in this sence: As I haue receiued power ouer nations of my father, so will I giue to him that ouercommeth power to rule with the rod of Iron, &c. Now come to the benefits.

Vers. 27.

First, here is promised by Christ, *power to rule over nations.* Christs power as he is mediator is very great: and here it is set forth by three arguments, borrowed from the second Psalm *verse. 8. 9.* First, by the largenesse of it, it reacheth not to one countie alone, but to all countries, and to all men, in all nations. Secondly, by the Souerainie of it Christs power is absolute in ruling, and

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ouerruling. And this his Soueraignie consisteth in two things: First, in making lawes vnto the conscience of men; so as if they be not kept, hee may iustly condemne them: and in ouerruling the wils of all men, conforming them to his will, will they nill they: which is signified by this, *He shall rule them with a rod of Iron.* Secondly, in that he hath this absolute power in himselfe to saue and to destroy, and therefore is said to haue (a) *The keyes of Heauen & Hel.* Which is signified in the next words, *And as the vessell of a potter shall they be broken.* Thirdly, by the fountaine of it, Christ receiueth this power from his father. Indeed as Christ is God he is equall with his father, and hath this power of himselfe; But as he is mediator his power is giuen him of his father, *Mat. 28. 18.*

For the better vnderstanding of this place, two questions must bee handled: First, how farre forth doth Christ giue this his power vnto men? *Ans.* Christs Soueraigne and generall power ouer the whole world is not indeed giuen to any creature, nay it is incommunicable, and cannot be conueyed from the person of Christ to the person of any creature man or Angell: this truth wee must hold of all Christs offices, they are onely in the person of Christ, and cannot passe from him to any other. *I I. Quest.* How then doth Christ say truly, that hee will giue him that ouercommeth power ouer nations. *Ans.* Not that his Soueraigne power is actually giuen to the creature; but because the creature being in Christ, hath the fruit & benefit of this power in his saluation. And this power is, in them two waies: First, hereby Christ makes all his seruants (being his mebers) partakers of his glorie in heauen, whereas the whole world besides is condemned in hell; and therefore we are said to (b) *bee raised vp together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Iesus.* And againe he saith, *The (c) saints shall iudge the world,* not in giuing sentence vpon them; but as witnesses & approuers of Christ his sentence: For the elect shall first receiue the sentence of absolution, & then being taken vp into the clouds shall sit with Christ, & there approve of the iust

condemnation of all the wicked. Secondly by this power he enableth those that be his, in their owne person to overcome all the enemies of their saluation. His meaning then is this, as if he had said, *Howsoeuer my Soueraigne power ouer all creatures in my selfe, cannot be deuied to any other; yet by vertue of this my power, I will exalt them that overcome, to partake of my glorie: and will giue them power in themselves ouer their sins, ouer death, hell, the world, and all the enemies of their saluation.*

Here then behold vnto what exceeding dignitie euery true seruant of God is advanced, not in himselfe, but in Christ: He hath rule ouer nations, and victorie ouer all the enemies of his saluation, yea he is made partaker of Christs glorie.

Hence we are taught to make conscience of euery sinne whatsoever; for the priuiledge of euery Christian is to haue power to iudge the wicked world: Now as it is a shame for a iudge that sitteth & condemneth a murderer or a theefe, to be a theefe, or a murderer himselfe; so it is for any christian to live in any one sin, seeing hee himselfe must condemne the world of those finnes. Neither can wee thinke that Christ will euer aduance him that liues in sinne, to condemne the same in others, vnlesse hee first reforme it in himselfe.

Secondly, the consideration of this priuiledge of a Christian, must bee hid in our minds against the time of aduersitie and affliction, and of the pangs of death. For hee that hath kept faith and good conscience all his life, is a prince in Iesus Christ, and shall rule ouer all his enemies. And therefore though now he bee afflicted and wronged by them, yet in Christ he is their iudge, and shall one day condemne them that do him wrong. And as for death, it is subdued in Christ, and shall be no death vnto him. *1. Corin. 15. vers. 54.*

Againe, the words in the originall are thus, *He shall feede and rule the nations, as a Shepherd ruleth and feedeth his lambs with his booke.* The Papists vpon the words of Christ to Peter, *Ioh. 21. 16. Feed my sheep,* that is feede and rule my sheepe, would gather Peters supremacy ouer the church

(b) Ephe. 2. 6.

(c) 1. Cor. 6. 2.

in all the world. But their grosse abuse of that place will appeare, by comparing it with this promise of Christ, to euery one that ouercommeth: for if their collection be good, then hence wil follow, that euery Christian man should haue the like supremacie, and be a Pope: which how absurd it is, euery man may iudge. Therefore that place in *Iohn* must not be vnderstood of any supremacie: for there Christ teacheth *Peter* the faithfull discharge of his office and dutie. From this first gift of Christ the Papists gather two things. I. That the seuerall saints in heauen are patrons of counties & kingdoms, as *Saint George* for England, *Saint Denis* for France, *Saint Patrick* for Ireland, &c. Secondly, that wee may pray vnto Saints, for the Saints rule the Nations, and therefore know all Nations; and if they know them, then they must bee prayed vnto. But they swarue from the meaning of this text: for first, it is not said, that the Saints shall haue power, one ouer one countrey and another ouer another; but euery Saint hath power ouer all nations: secondly, they haue power ouer all nations, not because they rule them actually, but because they haue the fruit and benefit of Christs power, whereby they are ruled. And for their second collection: wee must by nations vnderstand not all churches but vnbeleeuers, for the wicked are they that must be broken like potters vessels. Now the faithfull haue not power ouer the Churches but ouer infidels: & therefore both their collections are absurd.

Vers. 28. *I will giue him the morning starre.* Here is the second benefit promised by Christ to him that ouercommeth. The morning starre properly signifieth that bright star which riseth a little before the Sun, some time of the yeare, which the heathen call *Venus*. And hereby is ment Christ himselfe, as *Reu. 22. 16.* *I am the bright morning star.* Christ is called a star: First, because he illuminateth all men with the light of vnderstanding, and his Church with the knowledge of the will of his father, & that sufficiently in all matters that concerne saluation. Secondly, to shewe that the prophesie vntered by *Balaam* touching Christ whom he calleth (a) *the*

star of Iacob, is now fulfilled, when as Christ by his Apostles hath plentifully reuealed himselfe to all nations.

Further, he is called a *morning starre*: for that special resemblance which is betweene him and it; for the morning star riseth not in the beginning or middle of the night, but in the end of the night towards the beginning of the day when the sunne is about to rise, and then it shineth brighter than all other starres. Euen so Christ, he came not in the beginning or middle of the darke time vnder the law; but in the last age of the word, wherein after his incarnation he did shine most fully to all nations, so as there was no such light of knowledge before his comming as hath bene since. This *Peter* verifieth when he saith, (b) *We haue a most* *sure word of the Prophets, to which ye doe well that ye take heed, as vnto a light that shineth in a darke place, vntill the day dawne, & the day star arise in your hearts.* Where the time of the law & prophets is called a time of darknesse: and their preaching then, as a candle light: but the preaching of Christ vnder the Gospell, is as the day starre which shineth most brightly; hee is not called the morning star, because hee shineth to al the world in al time as the morning star doth, but because he shineth vnto men in the last age of the world.

It is further said, *I will giue him it.* Where is promised fellowship and participation with Christ, as he is the day starre. And herein are two benefits comprised: First, perfect illumination, whereby ignorance shal be wholly taken away after this life, when as men shall know God fully, so far forth as a creature can know the creator. Secondly, the light of perfect glorie, for by fellowship with Christ wee shall be made *to shine as the stars*, as *Daniel* (c) speaketh: yea, we shall become (d) *Saints in light*, as the Apostle saith.

Whereas Christ compares himselfe to the morning starre: First, we see the grosse error of many among vs, who liue in blindnesse of mind and ignorance, walking in their wicked lusts and pleasures, without care of keeping faith or good conscience, and yet persuaide themselves that they haue part in Christ, and

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(a) Num. 24.
17.

(c) Dan. 12. 3.
(d) Col. 1. 12.

and shall bee partakers of his light and glorie. But they are deceiued: for all such as liue in blind ignorance, and in sinne, are meere darknesse, and so can haue no fellowship with Christ, who is that bright morning starre: for what fellowship can bee betweene light and darknesse? This bright morning starre serueth onely for them that receiue the light thereof, and walke by it: but those that walke in the darknesse of their sins haue no benefit by it.

Secondly, seeing Christ is this morning starre, wee must haue care to learne Peters instruction; namely, *Labour that this bright star may rise & shine in our hearts.* This wee shall feelee, when wee vse those meanes wherby the beames of this starre may shine vpon vs, not onely for the enlightening of our minds, but also for the heating and reuiuing of our frozen and dead hearts. For as the Sunne in the Spring time quickeneth by it warme beames some things that lye dead all Winter: so Christ Iesus this morning starre by the beames of his grace: doth enlighten our minds, and reuiue our dead

and frozen hearts. And till such time as wee feelee these things wrought in vs, we cannot say, that this *morning starre* is risen vnto vs, or hath shone into our hearts.

Thirdly, whereas Christ appeareth in the morning, when darknesse is past; wee are hereby taught to lead our liues in godlinesse, righteousness, sobriety, and in all manner of vpright and godly conuersation, *For the night is past, and the day is come,* wherein we may see to walke vprightly, *And therefore wee must cast off the unprofitable workes of darknesse,* as the Apostle exhorteth vs, *Rom. 13. 12.* And know this, That those who in this light doe not walke accordingly, but delight in sinnes the workes of darknesse, shall one day haue their fill: Hee that loueth the darke, *(a)* *for the hiding of his talent,* Mat. 25. 30 must bee cast for his reward into *utter darknesse.*

Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare Verse. 29.
What the spirit saith vnto the Church.
Here is Christs commaundement, the second part of this conclusion: But hereof we haue spoken before.

Motiuues to proceed.

Prou. 15. 32. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his owne soule.

Luk. 9. 62. No man that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh backe, is apt to the Kingdom of God.

Gal. 6. 9. Let vs not bee wearie of well doing: for in due time wee shall reape, if wee faime not.

1. Cor. 12. 31. Desire you the best gifts, and I will shew you a more excellent way.



THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Vers. 1. And write vnto the Angell of the Church that is at Sardis, These things saith hee that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven starres, I know thy works for thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead.



Hese words containe the 3. particular commandement of our Saviour Christ vnto Iohn, wherein he is ioynted to write and send a speciall Epistle to the Church of God in Sardis: of this commandement wee haue spoken before. The Epistle it selfe, is contained in the fixe first verses, and hath three parts. A Preface the matter of the Epistle, and the Conclusion. The Preface in these words: *These things saith hee which hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven starres.* In this Preface, first is set downe in whose name this Epistle is written, to procure authoritie vnto it: it is in Christs name, whose soueraigntie is described by two royalties; that is, by two prerogatiues or priuiledges belonging to him, as hee is a soueraigne king of his Church: the first is, *The hauiing of the seven Spirits of God.* The second, *his hauiing of the seven starres.* For the first roialtie: In the first Chap. vers. 4. I shewed that by *seven spirits* were meant the *holy Ghost*; from whom proceed all the gifts and graces that any men enioy: and therefore whereas Christ is said to haue the *seven spirits of God*: the meaning is, that he hath the *holy Ghost*. And thus is a roialtie of Christ, as hee is the king & head of his Church. If it bee said, that other seruants of God, as *David, Peter, & Paul*, had the *holy Ghost*.

Ans. It is true: but not in the same manner with Christ; for he hath the *holy Ghost* two waies: in regard of his diuine nature, & of his manhood: as Christ is God, hee is the beginning of the *holy Ghost*: for the *holy Ghost* is a person in the Trinitie, proceeding from the sonne as well as from the Father; in regard of

which proceeding, Christ is said to send the *holy Ghost*, and to doe whatsoeuer hee doth by the *holy Ghost*, as to ouercome death by the eternall spirit, and to rise from death to life.

Secondly, as Christ is man he hath the *holy Ghost*: because the *holy Ghost* powred into him the perfection of all graces and gifts whatsoever. And for this cause he is said to be (a) *anointed with the oile of gladnesse above his fellows*, and to be enriched with the perfection of all graces, and that two wayes: both for number and degrees. For number: with men, some haue some graces, and some men others; but Christ hee hath the graces of all men, and all Angels: nay more graces in number, than all men and all Angels haue. And as they are in number perfect, so they are perfect in degree: for in measure they exceed the graces of all creatures, men or Angels: and therefore the father is said to haue *giuen the spirit vnto his sonne* (b) *without measure*: and thus much is meant by this first roialtie of Christ. Now the end why Christ is said to haue the *holy Ghost* is, to shew that hee is a most liuely head of his church, who is filled with plentie of all store of graces, whereby he is able to enrich his Church, and to reuiue the members thereof, who are dead in their sins; and such indeed was the speciall state, of this Church.

First hence we learne, no man can haue true fellowship with the *holy Ghost* but by Christ: it is manifest, that none can haue fellowship with the Father but by Christ. And here the same is verified touching fellowship with the *holy Ghost* especially for the obtaining of those graces that concerne eternall life. This serueth for our speciall instruction, for among the Papists there are many, that haue worthy and excellent gifts of God, as knowledge, memorie, &c. And yet in them be wanting the speciall gifts of the spirit, as faith which iustifieth, & regeneration: for touching assurance of these in themselves, they persecute themselves to be ignorant. And whence cometh this, but onely from their want of Christ: for the Christ of the Papists, as they teach him, is an idoll Christ; and therefore wee are not to maruell though wee see the most learned among them to scoffe and

mock at our doctrine of assurance of faith, & certaintie of election. II. we haue many among vs that will say, they looke to be saued by Christ, & to haue their sins pardoned by him, and yet you shall perceiue in them no grace of knowledge or conscience of true obedience. But these things cannot stand together, to wit, loosenesse of life, & forgiveness of sins: & therefore these men deceiue themselues, for if they had Christ, they should haue his spirit, and the graces thereof purging their hearts, for Christ and his spirit are neuer seuered: he that hath the spirit of Christ working in him faith & good conscience, hath an infallible token that Iesus Christ is his. This must admonish vs to labour for true vnion with Christ Iesus our head, to become flesh of his flesh, & bone of his bone: that in him wee may haue fellowship with the father and with the holy ghost, for till we be vnited vnto Christ, we shal neuer haue the graces of saluation wrought effectually in our hartes.

The second royaltie of Christ is, that he hath the *seuen starres*: that is, the *seuen* Pastors of the *seuen* Churches of Asia: they are called *starres*, because in their ministerie they inlighten men in the way that leadeth vnto life. And Christ is said to *haue them*, because hee is a soueraigne Lord ouer them, & they be his seruants. For he appointeth that person that shall be his minister among men, hee giueth him gifts meet for his calling; he prescribeth also vnto him his office and duties. But the Pastors of churches (will some say) are made by the Church? *Ans.* The right of ordaining Pastors belongs to Christ, as his roialtie: the office of the Church is to testifie, ratifie, & according to the word of God to approue of them whom Christ maketh and indueth with gifts: and for that cause is the church said to call and ordaine Ministers.

The end why Christ is said to haue soueraigntie ouer the ministers, is to strike the heart of the minister of this church of Sardis with conscience of his former negligence, & to stir him vp to diligence and carefulnesse in his place. And indeed the consideration of Christs soueraigntie ouer them, is an excellent motiue to stirre vp all ministers to bee diligent in their place, and so likewise all Christians. For considering that they are Christs, and the

gifts they haue come from him, this must moue them to make conscience of all good duties, for being Christs they must giue themselues wholly to doe the wil of Christ, whose they are. If he would haue vs liue, we must be thankfull because hee is Lord of life: if our death will glorifie him, we must be content, because wee are his. Thus much of the Preface.

The matter of this Epistle, containeth two parts: A reproof of a vice, with the remedie thereof, vers. 1. 2. 3. And a praise or commendation, vers. 4. The reproofe in these words, *I know thy works, that is, I know all thy works, they are all manifest vnto me, & I must like of them.* So must these words be vnderstood in this place, as may appeare by the reason of this reproofe in the words following, *I haue a name that thou lovest, but thou art dead.* Wherein is set cowne the fault of this church, namely, *Hypocrisie*: for that they pretended christian religion in outward profession, but yet wanted the life of christianitie, and the power of godlines: for the meaning of the reason is this: *thou hast a name that thou lovest*: that is, churches round about thee iudge and speake of thee, as of a church that is borne anew in Christ, and is guided by his spirit (for by life we must vnderstand *spirituall life*, not corporall) but yet for all this *thou art dead*: that is, thou wantest true spirituall life by regeneration, and art indeed dead in thy sinnes: this is a great and a sharpe reproofe.

That which is here said of this church of Sardis, may be truly verified of diuers churches in this age. As first, of the great church of Rome, who are guided by the Pope as by their head. That church hath a name to be alieue, & in their owne pretence it is the only true church of God in the world but in truth and before God it is dead. Some say, it is as a body full of diseases; and whose throat is cut: but yet the heart panteth, & life remaineth therein. But we may say, it hath no manner of spirituall life, but lyeth stark dead as a carkeasse in the graue. The reasons that some alledge for it, are of small moment: first they say it hath the sacramēt of baptism, which is a note of a true Church: and therefore it hath some life. *Ans.* First, Baptisme is not alwayes a note of a true church: for circumcision, in whose lead com-

commeth baptisme, was a sacrament vsed of the Samaritans when they were (a) no people of God, & so no church of God. Againe, Baptisme without the true preaching of the gospell, is no infallible signe of a church: it is but a seale pulled from the writing, or set to a bare paper to no vse: and further, outward baptisme without inward baptisme, is no note of a church: but such is baptisme in the church of Rome; it hath not inward baptisme ioined vnto it, neither the true preaching of the word; for the doctrine which they teach, is a quite ouerturning of Christ & his gospell: and therefore outward baptisme may be where there is no church. Secondly I answer, that baptisme in the church of Rome, is a Sacrament not to their Synagogue, but to the hidden church of God among them. For God had his church among them, euen in the midst of Poperie. There were alwayes some among them that renounced their religion, whom God called home vnto himselfe by the meanes which were among them; as the vse of this Sacrament, the Apostles Creed, and of other books of holy scripture. For as God said to *Elisai* in *Ahabs* time, (b) *I haue reserved seven thousand that neuer bowed the knee to Baal*: So may it bee said of many among the papists. God hath there his secret church, who neuer yeilded to the Popes government and doctrine.

Second reason, Antichrist (say they) *sitteth in the (c) Temple of God*. Now the temple of God, is Gods church; and therefore the church of Rome is Gods church? *Answer*. Hee sitteth there, not as a member thereof, but as an vsurper and deceuer. For in the Church of Poperie is the hidden church of God: they are therein mingled, as a little wheat with much chaffe, and as little gold with much drosse. So that though the church of God be where Antichrist sitteth, yet the church whereof hee is head, is no church of God: for whether we regard their doctrine or worship of God, there is no meanes to beget or preserve spirituall life in their Church. Further, this which Christ saith of Sardis, may be said not onely of the Papists, but of the churches of the Protestants, as of this our Church of England; and of the most congregations in the great townes thereof, though not for doctrine;

yet in regard of mens conuersations: for the body of our people seeme to be alme by their outward profession, but indeed they are dead in respect of the power of godlinesse; for by occasion of outward peace these sins abound, fulnes of bread, pride both inward in hart, & outward in attyre: also cruelty, couetousnes, & carnal security; like as it was in *Noahs* time. Now where these sins raigne, there the power of godlinesse is wanting: men content themselves with an outward profession, but the spirituall life of grace is not to be seene. And yet this doth not preiudice the state of our church, to nullifie it from being the church of God: for God hath his chosen among vs in al places, who liue indeed a spirituall life: though the bodie of our people be dead in sin, & so will continue while peace abideth; the threatnings of the ministers, will not awake men out of the sleep of sin; it must be the rod of correction that must put into them the power of religion. Men are like to little children, who besides admonition, must feelee the smart of the rod, to bring them to their dutie.

Further, in this Church of Sardis, whom Christ calleth dead, though they had a name to liue, note the state of the church of God; for this was a true church of God, who among the rest was washed in the blood of Christ, chap. 1. vers. 5. And yet Christ saith, *it is dead in some*: that is, in part, not wholly. And therefore a church that is in a very corrupt state, both in regard of outward conuersation, and of sundry erroneous opinions, may yet remaine the true church of Christ, if so be they erre not in the foundation. Which serueth for answer to them, that thinke our church to bee no church, because it maintaineth not that outward order which they thinke should bee in it. And therefore though we must preferre church before church; yet wee must not condemne a church to be no church, for some corruptions that be therein. A true body may haue some blemish, and a true church some wants.

Againe, the churches of God say, this is a church: yet Christ saith, they are dead. How can these two stand? *Answer*. The churches about Sardis iudged this to be alme, according to the rule of charitie, because of their outward profession

of true Religion: for as infants are not indeed all holy; as experience sheweth, yet till wee see the same made manifest, wee are in charitie to iudge them to bee holy, that are borne of faithfull parents: even so ought the Minister and every one in Gods Church, to thinke the best of euerie one in Gods Church, till God make manifest what he is. Paul following this rule, calleth whol churches elect.

But thou art dead. Here are two iudgements, one of neighbour Churches, the other of Christ, and Christs iudgement is preferred. Wee must therefore regard specially the iudgement of Christ, and labour to approoue our selues and our conuersations vnto Christ, rather than to men: for let men say what they wil of vs, it is Christ that must saue & condemne: this made (a) Paul to say, *I passe little to be iudged of you, or of mans iudgement: why so? for he that iudgeth me is the Lord.*

And indeed, without Christs commendation the iudgement of men is nothing: for Christ may condemne vs, when men thinke well and speake wel of vs: therefore hee sayth, *Woe bee vnto you, when all men speake well of you,* Luke 6. 26.

Verse 2. Bee watchfull, and strengthen the thing: that remains, that are ready to die: for I haue not found any work, perfect before God.

There be two degrees of hypocrisie: first, when men professe that which is not in their heart at all. The second, when men make profession of more than is in their heart: This second kind of hypocrisie oft befalleth the children of God; and it is that which Christ reproofeth in this church of Sardis, in the former verse. After which reproof, here he propoundeth remedie to their vice, and a reason to moue them to vse the same. The remedie is in the beginning of the verse, where are two duties prescribed: *To bee watchfull, and to strengthen or confirme the decayed grace of God in them.* For the first, *Bee watchfull:* to be watchfull, here is a most worthy and excellent dutie; it is not bodily, but spiritual; and it is practised when any man hath a constant care and diligent heed in respect of the salvation of his soule: This dutie of watchfulness

concerneth two things; sinne, and death. Watchfulness against sinne stands in two duties; First, a man must daily and continually bethinke himselfe before hand of all sinnes and vices into which he may haply fall: and for the doing of this, hee must consider in himselfe two things: his Nature, and his Calling. Touching his Nature, hee must consider, that in him remains the seed and root of all sinne, and therefore that hee may fall into any sinne whatsoever. Againe, a man considering his nature, shall find himselfe more inclined to some sinnes, than to others; and those hee must especially marke and obserue. Secondly, for his Calling: a man must marke the sinnes thereof: for since the fall of man, every calling hath his especial sinnes, whereto men that walke therein are more incident. The Magistrate hath his sinnes, the Minister his, the Lawyer his, the Physitian his, and the Tradesman his. And touching these, a man must consider vnto what vices and abuses men are most subiect, that walke in that calling: whereto in he liueth, and so shall he haue a foresight of the sinnes that hee may fall into. Secondly, after this foresight of sinne, he must watch his heart with all diligence; that though it be tempted and assaulted, yet it be not tainted with any one sin; as the wise man counseleth, (b) *Keep thy heart with all diligence,* that so the fountaine of all thy actions may be kept holy and pure. The second part of this watchfulness respecteth death, or the second coming of Christ. In this two things must be practised: first, a man must every day bethinke himselfe of his end, & of the coming of Christ, either in generall to all the world, or particularly vnto him by death: & in this consideration he must esteem & iudge of every day, as of the day of his death, or the day of iudgement. Secondly, he must prepare himselfe against death, & against the day of iudgement, every day, even this present day, as though hee should now die, or meet Christ in iudgement; and the next day do the like, and so goe on continually to the day of his death. And for our furtherance in this Christian watch, wee must be mindful of temperance and sobriety, that we keepe mediocrity in the vse of the creatures of God, & of the things of this life.

For

For when men plunge themselves, either in the cares of this world, or in earthly delights, they quite forget both sin and death, and the day of iudgement; and thus wee see what Christ meaneth by watchfulnesse.

The 7th.

As Christ prescribeth this dutie vnto this Church: so are wee in the name of Christ to bee enioyned the same Christian watchfulnesse, both against sinne and death, and the day of iudgement. And to moue vs hereto, consider these reasons. First, wee are watchfull for the preservation of the things of this life: as if a towne bee in danger of sacking, or burning, there is watch and ward kept continually: and if a mans house bee in danger of robbing, hee will sit vp night and day to saue his goods: yea euery man is very painfull and watchfull to heape vp to himselfe, the things of this world: Now, what a shame is it, that men should bee watchfull in temporall things, and yet haue no care of their soule that must liue for euer? Again, want of watchfulnesse is the forerunner of death, and eternall destruction. 1. Thess. 5. vers. 3. *When men say peace and safetie, then shall come vpon them sudden destruction.* When the rich man had enlarged his barnes vpon the encrease of his substance, hee promised to himselfe ease and securitie: saying (a) *Soule, soule, take thy rest, &c.* but it was said vnto him, *Oh soule, this night shall thy soule bee taken from thee.* And the (b) *old world knew nothing, till the flood came and destroyed them all.* Now, if the want of watchfulnesse bee the forerunner of destruction, how great a cause haue wee to watch?

The second dutie inioyned, is to confirme the graces of God decayed in them. *Strengthen the things which remaine, that are ready to die:* as if hee should say, sundry be the graces which I haue bestowed on you: but many are lost and gone: and those which remain, are about to perish, vnlesse you confirme them; therefore see now that you strengthen and repaire the same.

In this duty, Christ teacheth this church and vs an excellent lesson, that whosoever hath received any gift of God, must haue care to preserve it, and to make the same gift strong in him by continuall increase. If a man haue receiued know-

ledge, faith, and repentance, or any other gift of grace, he must not suffer the same to lye dead in him, but stirre vp increase, and confirme it daily, that hee may bee a perfect man in Christ. For the gifts which men haue are not their owne, but Gods also, who looketh to receiue his owne with aduantage. And therefore men like good Stewards must so vse the gifts receiued, that they may return them to God with increase. Thus Paul persua- deith *Timothie*, (c) *Stirre vp the gift of God which is in thee:* for els the receiuer is an vnfaithfull seruant, and so shall be rewarded. And for the better performance of this dutie: wee must often read the word of God, and meditate therein: we must heare it often preached; and with due reuerence and preparation receiue the Sacrament: and pray continually, striving earnestly against the corruptions that be in vs; and daily stirring vp our heart to all good duties. Thus did *Dauid* checke the corruption and deadnesse of his hart: (d) *Why art thou so cast downe oh my soule?* and also stirre vp the same vnto all good duties, saying, *I haue applied my heart to fulfill thy statutes alwaye euen to the end,* Psal. 119. 112.

Hereby are reprobued, the common sort of professors & hearers of the word: who stand at a stay, and go not forward in grace. This is a great fault, for as we haue receiued grace, so we ought to stirre vp the same, that we may confirme, and increase it dayly.

Further, Christ addeth, *Which are about to die*, where hee answereth to a question that is moued by sundry at this day, namely: whether graces that concerne saluation, may bee utterly lost or no? Christ answereth by a distinction, that some graces that pertaine to saluation, may be lost quite: and others may be decayed so as they are about to die. For the graces of God that pertaine to saluation, be of two sorts: some bee absolutely necessarie, so as without them a man of yeres cannot be saued: and such are *faith* and *regeneration*. Others be lesse necessary, which sometime go with faith, but not alwayes; such are, *A plentiful feeling of the fauour of God, joy in the holy Ghost, and boldnesse in prayer*; these may bee lost wholly for a time in the seruants of God: Yea, faith and regeneration themselves, may

decay greuously, and be readie to die, as this text saith. Secondly, consider faith and regeneration in themselves, and they may be wholly lost, for nothing in it selfe is vnchangeable, but God. The state of the elect angels by nature is changeable, for they stand by the power of God. Thirdly, these graces may perish and decay finally, vntill they bee confirmed. *Question.* Why then doe not the elect finally fall away after their calling? *Ans.* Their standing cometh not from the constancie of grace or faith, but from the promise of God made vnto them, and to their faith, so Christ saith to Peter, (a) *Thou art Peter, and vpon this rocke,* that is, vpon thy faith which thou hast professed, *will I build my temple, & the gates of hell shall not preuaile against it:* that is, though they may assault it, and greuously weaken it, yet they shall never be able finally to overcome it.

The Vse.

Seeing sundrie graces of God may be lost, and the most necessary graces greatly decay, yea, of themselves quite die: we that haue received from God any grace, either of faith or repentance, are hereby taught not to be presumptuous, nor over confident in our selves, but with feare & trembling worke out our saluation. Philip. 2. 13.

The reason to enforce the former remedie, is this: *For I haue not found thy work perfect before God:* and therefore watch, and confirme the decayed graces of God that be in thee. In this reason, Christ giueth them and vs to vnderstand, that hee maketh a search in his church of all the workes that men do in the same, that hee may accordingly reward them; for not finding doth presuppose a search. And so the Scripture speaketh of God vnto the old world was destroyed, it is said; *The Lord saw that the wickednesse of man was great vpon the earth, as if he had looked from heaven vpon the earth, and beheld that it was corrupt, speaking after the manner of men, to signifie that search which hee maketh into mens actions. And so hee is said to come downe from heaven, at the building of Babell, Gen. 11. & before he destroyed Sodome & Gomorrah, (e) he came downe to see whether they had done according to that crime, which was comm vnto him. And so before the Lord punished the wickednes of the*

(a) Gen. 6. 5.

(e) Gen. 18. 21

Israelites, (d) *Hee made a search into their wayes;* and the second Commandement is this, *God will visit the sinnes of the father vpon the children:* that is, hee will make a search, whether the sinnes of the fathers be among the children, and if they be, he will punish them.

(d) Lev. 24. 12.

N.B.

Seeing Christ makes this search into all mens actions, we are taught in all things to haue care to conform our selues to the will of Christ: & to set our selues to the doing of all good duties, according to his word: If wee knew a magistat would come to make search in our house, wee would be sure to let all things in order against he came: shall we be thus circumspect to prepare for the coming of an earthly man? & shall we not much more prepare our selves against the search of our Saviour Christ the euerming God, from whom nothing can be hid?

I haue not found thy work perfect. Works are perfect two wayes; by the Law, or by the Gospell. By the law, when in our workes we do all that the law requireth; & thus are no mans workes perfect in this life. By the gospell, our workes are perfect when they proceed from a beleeuing hart, that hath a care to please God in all things: & these workes are perfect not in themselves, but in the acceptation of Christ. Here by *perfect workes*, Christ meaneth not the perfection of the law, but of the gospell, as if hee had said, *I haue searched into your wayes; you doe many workes in law, but they proceed not from sincere faith, nor from a heart that hath care to please God in all his commandements & a full purpose not to sin against him: you haue a shew of godliness, but you want the power thereof.*

Here obserue that Christ condemneth this church, not because their workes were not outwardly conformable to the will of God; but because they proceeded not from a beleeuing heart, that had a full purpose to forsake all sinne, and to please God in all things.

Wee therefore must take heed of all hypocrisie by the example of this Church: and labour to bee of *Dauids* mind; and pray with him, (e) *That our hearts may bee upright in the statutes of the Lord:* That wee may say with *Hosea*, (f) *Bebola Iudah, I haue walked before thee with an upright mind, for this*

The Vse.

(e) Ps. 119. 10

(f) Hos. 12. 3

this is a notable token of grace, and an infallible badge of him that is the childe of God.

Before God. Some may say, Christ here distinguisheth himselfe from God, and therefore he is not God. *Ans.* By (God) in this place we must vnderstand not God simply, but God the father. For Christ here speaketh of himselfe, not as he is God, but as he is mediator God and man, in which respect, euen as hee is now glorified, he is inferiour to his Father.

Where note that Christ beeing now glorified in heauen, carrieth himselfe as mediator, whence we gather that we may lawfully, and without presumption pray vnto Christ, without the means or intercession of Saints or Angels. The church of Rome demie this; and say, because Christ is now in full glorie in heauen, therefore we must vse vnto him the mediation of Saints: but Christ being now in heauen, marks our workes in particular: and therefore we may without presumption come vnto him by prayer.

Vers. 3. Remember therefore how thou hast receiued and heard, and hold fast, and repent: If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what houre I will come vpon thee.

When Christ hath reprooued them for their sinne of hypocrisie, and prescribed them a remedie with a reason thereof; he doth as a good Physitian and pastor, shew them the way how they may practise that remedie. For they might say; we are commanded to watch, and to renew our decayed graces, but how shall we do this? Christ answereth, by doing three things. I. by remembering that which thou hast receiued by hearing. II. by holding fast. III. by repenting of thy sinnes.

For the first, *Remember therefore*, that is, call to mind the doctrine of saluation which thou hast bin taught by mine Apostles. This remembrance is a most excellent means to moue a man to subiection to Gods will, to repent, and to practise all good graces. *When David saw the prosperitie of the wicked, his feet had almost slept:* but his remedie against that temptation was his *(b) going to Gods sanctuary,*

and there calling to mind the end of those men. Again, *(c) I haue remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and haue kept thy law.* Peter denied his Master, when he forgot his word: but when he was put in mind thereof by the looke of Christ, and the crowing of a Cocke, *hee then repented, and wept bitterly,* Lu. 22. 61. 62. Sinnes committed by men of ignorance, are many and grievous: and therefore all sinns are called *ignorances*, Heb. 9. 7. but if men would by faith keep in mind the word of God, it would bee a notable means to keepe them from sinning.

Here then we haue a soveraigne remedie against sin: namely, wherefoever we are, or whatsoeuer we do, we must call to mind the word of God, & the promises of God: and those will be a lantern vnto our steps, & a light vnto our pathes. The diuell laboureth about all things, to bring vs to forget the word, for then hee knows he can easily draw vs into any sin. *Quest.* How shall wee keepe in mind the word and promises of God? *Ans.* That is a grace of God, and for the attaining vnto it, we must first labor to haue our hearts affected with the loue of Gods word & promises: for a man can neuer keepe in mind that, whereof he hath no liking. Secondly, we must labour to beleue the word of God: For faith giues it footing in our hearts, Colof. 2. 7. The cause why there is so little remembering of that which is taught, is, for that it is not mixed with faith in those that heare it.

Againe, the thing to be remembered is, *How thou hast receiued and heard:* that is, looke what doctrine thou hast receiued by hearing, and that remember. Where wee see Christ ioyneth receiving and hearing together. Whence we may gather, that teaching and receiving of the word of God by hearing, is the prescribed generall means, whereby God reuealeth his will, counsell, and purpose touching the saluation of mankind: neither is there any other means appointed hereunto in the word of God.

This sheweth, that their opinion is false, who teach that God calleth all the world, effectually vnto saluation; for how can they bee called, that neuer heard of the word of God? but all in all ages neuer heard of the word of God; albeit since the coming of Christ, their sound hath gone

gone forth into all nations. Secondly, this sheweth the fondnesse of their opinion, who defend the Doctrine of *universal grace*: that God should giue grace pertaining to saluation, vnto euery man in the world, so as he may be saued if he will: for the meanes to receiue grace, is the hearing of the word, which all men in all ages neuer had vouchsafed vnto them.

The second dutie prescribed, is *the holding fast of this doctrine*. To hold fast here signifieth two things; first, to maintaine the doctrine of the Gospell received and taught by the Apostles. Secondly, to put the same in practise in a godly life: of these wee haue spoken before, cap. 2. 25.

The third dutie is *to repent*: where by repentance is not meant the beginning of repentance: but the *renewing and restoring of the same*, for their hardnesse and deadnesse of hart, whereby they did slackly and coldly practise the good duties which they did professe.

The vse.

Hereby wee are taught not to content our selues with the beginning of repentance, but we must renew the same continually, & that not for grosse finnes only, but even for the wants that be in vs, as for our dulnesse and deadnesse of hart, and for our hypocrisie, and decay in Gods graces.

And because this Church was verie dead and dull of hart; therefore Christ addeth a reason to mooue them to the practise of this dutie: which is a most terrible threatning, in these words: *If thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a theefe, and thou shalt not know what houre I will come vpon thee.*

Here marke Christs order & dealing: hauing prescribed a remedie for their fault, hee giueth them a direction to practise the same; and after addeth a most terrible threatning to driue them thereunto; as if he should say, If thou wilt not watch against sinne, and against death, and for that end remember my word, hold fast the same, & repent; then looke as a theefe comes vpon a man on a suddaine, and spoyle his goods, and cuts the throat of his children; so will I come on thee on a suddaine, and power vpon thee my wrath, whereby I will euen cut the throat of thy foule, and thou shalt haue no meanes to escape my punishment.

Here Christ threatneth suddaine and speedie destruction, but yet with condition and limitation of repentance. Now, because we be like this Church (as hath bene shewed) by reason of the long peace which wee inioy: wee may also vse the same reason and threatning at this day, to stirre vp our dead hearts. Wee must watch against all sin, and against death: and for this end must haue in memorie the word of God, and hold fast the faith vnto the end, & repent continually of all wants: but if we do not this, then are the vengeance, and eternall punishments of God, to bee powred vpon vs without measure, & that suddenly, when we cannot preuent them. If a man haue but a sparke of grace, the consideration hereof will mooue him to repentance, and to watchfulnesse; but if this will not awake a man out of his finnes, then nothing remaineth but a fearfull expectation of the wrath of God, which shall be vnauoidable, and endure for euer. Indeed if a man had some thousand yeres allotted for the punishment of his sins, there were some cause why hee might continue in them: but seeing this punishment is eternal, and when many thousand yeres are expired, they are as farre from the end of their wo as euer they were; therefore it must stirre vp all dead and drowzie hearts vnto repentance, and cause them to shake off securitie, ignorance, and coldnesse in religion, and to breake off the course of euery sinne.

Verf. 4. *Notwithstanding thou hast a few names, y. e. in Sardie, which haue not defiled their garments, and they shall walke with me: in white; for they are worthy.*

Here beginneth the second part of the matter of this Epistle, namely, *the praise and commendation* of some part of this Church. The words doe thus depend vpon those which went before; whereas Christ had said, that this church was dead in sinne, and had onely a name to liue; some man might aske, how it could bee a true Church. To this Christ answereth in the beginning of this verse, That though the greatt part in this Church were dead in their finnes, yet some few there were among them that were alme in Christ, and did testifie the same

the same by true and sincere obedience.

In this coherence we may obserue two instructions. I. that a particular congregation on earth is made a church of God & so called in regard of Gods elect therein, who do truly beleue. For the priuiledges of a church belong vnto particular congregations, onely by reason of the faith of the elect among them. The Catholike Church is the whole company of the elect truly beleuing in Christ, and particular congregations are members of it, so far forth as they do truly beleue; the rest that doe not truly beleue are not members of the church before God, but only in the iudgement of men: like vnto superfluous humors which are in the body, but no parts thereof. This confuteth the doctrine of the church of Rome, who teach that wicked men that are reiects in Gods decree, may yet bee true members of the church of God.

Secondly, in this coherence Christ intimateth vnto vs a distinction betweene man and man in this church, for all that were in this church, were men called, professing Christ and his Gospell: and yet of them, some were dead in their sinnes, and others were aliue in Christ. Touching this distinction of men, wee must search the cause thereof. It must not be ascribed to any power or will in man, but to the good pleasure of God, as the scripture teacheth; for when the body of the Israelites had giuen themselves to Idolatrie, there were yet *(a)* *seven thousand that neuer bowed the knee to Baal*: what was the cause why they did not liue like to the other Israelites? Surely nothing in the will of man, (though the Idolatrie of the other, was to bee ascribed to themselves) but the text is cleare, it was the good pleasure of God, who had preserued and kept them.

Thes.

By this wee see how erroneous and false the diuinitie of some Protestants is; which ascribe the cause of this distinction betweene man and man, to the libertie of mans will being renewed by grace: saying, That God giues to euery man sauuing grace, by vertue whereof, hee may repent and beleue if hee will: but yet because the will of man doth still remaine sinfull, hence it commeth, that he hath libertie, to obey, or not to obey.

And therefore the cause why some men lye dead in sinne, is because they set their will to refuse the grace of God; and the cause why some men liue in Christ, is because they encline their will to embrace the grace of God. But this doctrine doth greatly diminish the grace of God, in that it maketh the acceptance thereof to lye and depend on the pleasure and will of man: when as the power of almightie God ioyned with his will, is the true cause thereof, leauing some to themselves, who do fall, and enabling others to stand by his grace.

Now follow the wordes of this commendation. *Notwithstanding thou hast a few names yet in Sardie*; that is, There bee yet in this Church a few persons knowne to mee by their names: (for by *Names*, wee must vnderstand persons named) *which haue not defiled their garments*. Here (to omit many expositions) is an allusion to the Ceremoniall law, wherein God set downe a distinction betweene things cleane and vncleane, not in themselves, but by his appointment: and among the Iewes, if any man had but touched an vncleane thing with his hand, or with his garment, thereby hee was defiled, and his garment defiled legally; and so hee or his garment were reputed vncleane: whereupon they had a speciall care not to touch the things that were defiled, no not with their garments. Now this signified another thing vnto them: namely, That they ought to abstayne, not onely from the outward sinnes of the morall Law, but even from all occasions, intentions, shewes, and appearances of euill. And in this place, this is meant hereby: that some in this Church of Sardie, had so farre made conscience of sinne, that they would not meddle with the vaine occasions and appearances of euill.

Hereby wee see, that the seruants of God are but few in number: for the bodie of this people were dead in sinne, and a few onely in this great place liued in Christ: so Christ sayth to his Disciples, *The flocke to whom the father (b) will giue the kingdome of heauen, is but a little flocke*. The Prophet *Isay*

(a) Rom. 11. 4

(b) Lu. 12. 32.

- (a) *May 6. 9.* Ifay is sent, (a) *To harden the hearts of the bodie of the people for their iniquities:* and (b) *the tenth part onely must be saved:* and in the Gospel it is said, (c) *The way to hell is broad, and many there bee that walke therein: but the way to heauen is straight, and few there be that enter into it.*

The 7th.

Hereby then we are taught not to follow the example of the multitude, but of the fewer and better sort. It is a foule sinne that keepes many from religion, and brings them to destruction; when they will liue after the maner of the world and as their Forefathers haue done. This is a false rule, and a dangerous course.

Thou hast a few names. That is, persons whose names I know and haue recorded. They are called names, because Christ obserues and knowes them by their names. Where note, that those that are the true seruants of God, are particularly knowne vnto Christ. (d) *The haire of your head are numbered* (saith Christ to his Disciples) much more were their names knowne Againe, he biddeth them

(e) *Luke 12. 7.*

(f) *Luke 10. 2.*

reioyce that their names (e) were writt in heauen. And Christ the good Shepheard knowes his sheepe, and calls them by their names, loh. 10. 3.

This is a matter of endlesse comfort vnto the people of God: for what can cause a man more to reioyce, than to know that his name particularly is knowne to the King of Kings, and that accordingly he hath speciall regard vnto him? When the Lord would comfort *Moses*, and put courage into him in doing the duties of his calling; hee telleth him, *That he was knowne vnto him by (f) name.* Yea, this is the foundation of mans saluation: (g) *The Lord knoweth who are his.*

(f) *Exod. 33. 13. 14.*

(g) *1. Ti. 2. 19.*

Which haue not defiled their garments: Here they are commended for vprightnesse and sinceritie of life and conuersation, in that they kept themselves from the verie shewes and appearance of euill; when as the rest of this church was dead in sinne.

In their example Christ prescribeth vnto vs a patterne of true pietie, how wee ought to cary our selues in the Church of God on earth: wee must not content our selues with a bare profession of Religion, and keepe our selues from

grosse finnes only, but abstaine from the verie shewes of euill. Yea, more particularly, here are three things taught vs, touching sinne. First, that we ought to make conscience of euerie sinne in our owne person. Secondly, that we ought to keep our selues from the contagion of sinne in others, either by giuing consent vnto them, or furthering and allowing them any way therein. Thirdly, that wee ought to abstaine from the very occasions, and shewes, and appearances of finnes: So *Paul* teacheth vs (b) *to abstaine from all appearance of euill.* Ephes. 5. 3. Hee will not haue sundrie sins, as fornication, vncleanesse, &c. so much as once named, thereby to giue the least approbation vnto them. Wee must therefore looke on this example, lay it to our hearts, and conforme our liues vnto it: so shall wee bee good seruants of God, and haue the same commendation with these few: for true religion stands not in knowledge, but in obedience, and this is true obedience, to make conscience of euerie sinne in our owne persons; to take heed of the infection of sinne in others: and to abstaine from the appearance of euill. A happie church should we haue, if these things were practised: but this is the shame and reproach of our profession, that wee haue no care of true obedience in our selues and others, whereby wee should glorifie God, and grace our holy Religion.

(b) *1. Thess. 5. 22.*

The church of Rome hence gather, that a man after baptism, may liue without mortall sinne. For these few persons in this church in their baptism, put on Christ, and after kept their selues from all occasions of finnes, so as they had not committed any mortall sinne. But their collection is vnsound: for first, though they had to this time abstained from all mortall sinne, yet how can they proue that they sinned not afterward? Secondly, they are said, *not to haue defiled their garments*, not for that they had not committed any sinne, but because they endeouored to keepe themselves from the appearance of all sinne: and so must the obedience which is ascribed to Gods children in scripture, be vnderstood: namely, of their sincere purpose and endeour to obey, & so among

vs, those that haue a settled purpose and resolution to make conscience of every sin, and in all things to doe the will of God, they are reputed for keepers of the law. For God in his children accepts the will for the deed. *And they shall walke with mee in white.* After the commendation of these few, Christ addeth a promise of liuing with him in glorie. For so white garments haue alwaies beene vsed to signifie *ioy, happinesse, life, and glorie.* Ecclesiast. 9. 8. *At all times let thy garments be white,* that is, take the delight and pleasure in vsing the creatures of God; So that here these few haue a promise to be freed from all want, and to liue with Christ in all glorie, ioy, and pleasure.

This benefit, hath beene in effect further vrged in the former Chapter: here onely I will note one Doctrine; namely, That they which liue in the world among the wicked, and doe not communicate with their sinnes, shall not partake with them in their punishments; for the bodie of this Church must haue Christ to come amongst them as a Theefe, but the godly must walke with Christ in white, in glorie. (a) *Let* was freed from the destruction of the Sodomites, because he partaked not with them in their sinnes: and among the Israelites, (b) *Those that mourned for the sinnes of the people, are marked in the fore-head, that when Iudgements came upon the wicked, they might bee spared.*

(a) Gen. 19.

(b) Ezech. 9. 4.

This point must be remembred, for by reason of long peace and prosperitie among vs many sinnes abound, as Ignorance, Atheisme, contempt of Religion, and prophaning of the Lords Sabbath, with innumerable sinnes of the second table. All which call for Iudgements from heauen, and no doubt they will bee punished, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come, vnlesse our people doe repent. Those therefore that would not partake of the common Iudgements that are to come, must now beware that they communicate not with the common sinnes that doe abound, and see that they keepe faith and good conscience, hauing their righteous and zealous hearts grieved, for the abominations among which they liue.

After the promise, is adioyned the reason thereof, *For they are worthy.* Hence the Church of Rome doth conclude, that a man by his workes may merit Heauen, because they bee worthy of reward. A most blasphemous conclusion, and a manifest abuse of the word of God. Gods children indeed *are* *worthy of life euermlasting*; but not by the merit of their workes, for then they should bee done according to the rigour of the Law: but for the worthynesse of their person, when as they stand righteous before God in Christ; for when God will saue any man, he giues Christ vnto that man truely and really; so as hee may say, Christ is mine. And with Christ God giues his spirit which worketh in his heart true sauing faith, whereby hee doth receiue Christ; and so Christ and his righteousness belongs vnto that man really, and by vertue thereof hee is worthy life euermlasting; and this is the worthynesse which Christ meaneth in this place, and not any worthynesse of their workes: so that this doth helpe them nothing at all, and yet it is the most probable place of Scripture, to proue and iustifie the Doctrine of mans merits.

Two kinds of worthynesse.

Vers. 5. *Hee that ouercommeth shall be clothed in white array, and I will not put out his name out of the Booke of life; but I will confesse his name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

Vers. 6. *Let him that hath an ear, heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle: and it containeth two parts: a promise, and a commaundement. The promise in the fifth verse, and the commaundement in the sixth. In the promise note two things: first, the parties to whom it is made, *To him that ouercommeth*, whereof wee haue spoken (c) before. Secondly, the thing promised: to wit, glorie and eternall happinesse, which is expressed three waies. First thus: *Hee shall bee clothed in white array*: that is, hee shall haue euermlasting life

(c) Chap. 3. 7.

life and happinesse, so much is signified by white rayment as wee haue alreadie shewed.

The Vjs.

Hence the Church of Rome conclude, that a man may do good workes respecting a reward. *Ans.* In some sort it is true; for so it is recorded of Moses, Heb. 11.26. *He had respect to the recompence of reward.* But yet the recompence of reward, must not be the principall end of our good workes: for chiefly we must thereby intend to testifie our faith, and our obedience vnto God, and with that wee may haue respect to euerlasting life.

The second thing promised; *And I will not put out his name out of the booke of life.* For the vnderstanding of this, two questions must be scanned: First, what this booke of life is: Secondly, whether a man may be blotted out of this Booke. For the first; this booke of life is nothing else, but Gods predestination or eternall decree of Election, whereby hee hath chosen some men vnto salvation vpon his good pleasure. And this is called a Booke, because it is like vnto a Booke. For as the Generall in a Campe, hath the names of all his souldiours that fight vnder him, in a Booke; and as the Magistrate of a Towne hath the name of euery free man and Denison inrolled: so God in the booke of his Election, hath the names of all that shall be saued.

For the second Question. A man may be written in the Booke of life two waies: either truely before God, or in the iudgement of men onely. Those whose names are truely before God written in this booke, cannot be blotted out: For Gods counsel touching the eternall state of euery man, is vchangeable. This the golden Chaine of Gods decree, doth plainly shew: (a) *For whom hee hath predestinate, them hee hath called, and whom hee called, them also hee iustified, and whom hee iustified, them hee also glorified.* Others there be that haue their names written in this Booke, onely in the iudgement of men: and thus are all men written in the Booke of life, that professe the Gospell of Christ in his Church: for so charitie bindes vs to iudge of them. And these may haue their names blotted out, In

this sence doth the Scripture often speake: as when the Prophet wisheth, (b) *That God would blot his enemies out of the Booke of life* (meaning Judas principally) his meaning is, that it might be made manifest, his name was neuer written therein. This then is the meaning of this promise: that they who doe auoid the occasions of sinne, and haue care to keep faith and good conscience vnto the end, haue their names written in the booke of life, and they shall neuer be blotted out.

Hence I gather two things. First, that the number of the elect, in respect of God is certaine: for the names of those which are to be saued, be as it were written in a booke, and being once written in, they remaine there for euer. Some do teach, that all may be saued, if they will: but this is a meere fancie of man: for what should there need any booke of life, if that were so? Secondly, hence I gather, that this number can neither increase, nor be diminished, let men doe what they can: *If they had borne of vs they would haue continued with vs.* 1. Ioh. 2.19. *All that thou hast given mee haue I kept, and none of them is lost.* Iohn 17.12.

Whereas a man may be written in the booke of life, to wit, in the iudgement of men, and yet be blotted out: hereby wee are to be admonished, to looke vnto our selues, and to make conscience of euery sinne, and to auoid and shunne the very occasions thereof. For so long as wee professe the Gospell, and obey the same, our names be in the booke of life: but when wee commit any sinne, we doe as much as in vs lyeth, make a penne, and reach it vp to heaven to blot our names out of that booke: and they that keepe a course in sinning, doe plainly shewe that they were neuer truely written therein.

Secondly, considering that the number of the elect is certaine, it must be a motiue to cause vs to labour for some assurance of election, that wee may truely say, wee haue our names written in Gods Booke. But here some bad person will say, seeing the number of the Elect is vchangeable, I will liue as I list; for if my name be in the

(a) Rom. 8.30

The Vjs.

the booke of God, it shall neuer be blot-
ted out; and if it be not in, it can neuer be
added. *Answ.* These men deceive their
owne soules: for they that haue their
names written in the booke of life, shall
liue as these few did in this Church of
Sardis, in true faith and holy obedience.
For he that is ordained for glorification,
is ordained to iustification and sanctifi-
cation: and it is impossible for him that
shall be saued, to liue alway in sinne, and
therefore these men must rather labour to
repent and beleue, and to get some signs
of their election, that they may know
that their names are written in the booke
of life.

The third benefit is this: *I will confesse
his name before my Father, & before his An-
gels.* That is, in the day of iudgement I
wil acknowledge and professe him to be
mine; one of mine elect, that keepeth
faith and good conscience vnto the end.
I wil take him from the company of the
wicked world, and set him on my right
hand, and aduance him to glorie, pro-
nouncing vpon him the blessed voyce of
absolution. *Come, thou blessed of my father,*
Mat. 25. 34. The end why this benefit is
thus propounded, is to draw this church
to professe the name of Christ in this
world: for if they would professe Christ
before men, hee will acknowledge them
for his owne at the last day.

The Vjs.

This same reason here propounded,
must induce vs to make a true confession
of Christ, against the world & al Christs
enemies: which to doe is a very hard
matter, and man of himself cannot stand
out; but yet the consideration of this, that
Christ will confesse him at the last day,
will bee a notable motiue and meanes to
inable him thereto. If an earthly prince
should come to a man among a great
company, and cal him by his name, spea-
king kindly vnto him, he would esteeme
it a great honour vnto him; and for that
he would not slicke to die in the princes
cause. Oh then, what honour is this, that
Christ Iesus will in the last day vouch-
safe to all those that in this life doe sin-
cerely confesse him, and overcome. Hee
will confesse him to bee his, and receiue
him to his owne glorie. But on the con-
trarie, those that will not confesse him
here, but disgrace him; either by false do-
ctrine, or profanenesse of life, wil Christ

at the day of iudgement vterly disgrace,
by denying them to be his, & there pro-
nounce vpon them the fearefull sentence
of condemnation, *Goe ye cursed, &c.*
Which if we would then escape, and also
procure vnto vs the ioyfull voyce of ab-
solution: wee must here labour to hold
the truth of Christs doctrine, and also
keepe a good conscience vnto the end.
But if wee onely professe him in iudge-
ment, & not in the practise of a holy life,
surely Christ will professe that he knows
vs not, and then giue vs our portion with
the diuell and his angels.

The commandement followeth: vers.
6. *Let him, &c.* of which wee haue spo-
ken.

Verse 7. *And vnto the Angell of the
Church which is of Philadelpia, write:
These things saith hee, which is holy and
true; which hath the key of David, which
openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth
and no man openeth.*

Here beginneth the sixth particular E-
pistle of our Saviour Christ, from this
verse to the 14. And before it (as to the
rest) is prefixed a speciall Commaunde-
ment vnto *Iohn*, whereby hee is iniointed
to write this Epistle vnto the Church of
Philadelphia; the end of which com-
mandement, is to warrant the calling of
Iohn to write this Epistle: but of this wee
haue spoken before.

The Epistle it selfe containeth three
parts: a Preface, the matter of the Epi-
stle, and the Conclusion. The Preface
in this verse, *These things saith hee, &c.*
Wherein is set down, in whose name this
Epistle is sent; namely, *in Christs*: where
(as in the former Epistles) he is excellent-
ly described, for the winning of more
credit vnto this Epistle: and that, first by
his properties: *Holinesse, and truth*: Se-
condly, by his kingly office, in the words
following.

For his properties. First, Christ is said
to be holy. *Quest.* How can Christ be said
to be holy as he is man, considering hee
descended from *Adam*, who conueyed
his sinne and the guylt thereof, to all his
posteritie? The common answer is this;
That indeed Christ descended from *A-
dam*, as hee is man: but his substance
was sanctified by the holy Ghost in the
wombe

wombe of the Virgine, and thereby hee was freed from *Adams* sinne. This answer is true, but not sufficient: for men besides the corruption originall, take from *Adam* the guiltinesse of that sinne which *Adam* committed. Now sanctification taketh away the corruption of sin, but not the guilt thereof, therefore a more full answer is this: That all which come of *Adam* by naturall generation, doe receiue by that order which God set in nature at the creation, saying, *increase and multiply*, both the nature of *Adam* & the sin & guilt thereof. But God for the preventing of this in the Incarnation of Christ, ordained that Christ should not come of *Adam* by naturall generation, but by a myraculous conception of the holy Ghost: whereby hee tooke the nature of man with the infirmities thereof, without the sinne of mans nature, or the guiltinesse thereof. And thus is Christ free from sinne as he is man.

Further, Christ is holy two wayes. In himselfe; and in regard of his Church. In himselfe, hee is holy sundry wayes: first, in regard of his Godhead, for his diuine nature is holinesse it selfe. Secondly, as hee is man; for his manhood was not onely freed from all manner of sinne, by reason of his myraculous conception, but it was also enriched and filled with holinesse, and that in greater measure than all men & Angels, for he receiued the gifts of the holy Ghost without measure. And againe, as he is man, Christ is holy in regard of his obedience and actions; for liuing on earth he did actually as our seruie fulfil the Law for vs. Secondly, Christ is holy in regard of his church. First, because hee is the authour of that holinesse, which is in euery member of his Church. Yea, hee is holy in regard of men in a further respect; namely, as the roote of all mens holinesse, as he is Mediator. For looke as from *Adam* is actually conveyed originall sinne to euery one of his posteritie that commeth by naturall generation: so from Christ is righteousnesse and holinesse conveyed to all that beleue in him: and for this cause hee is called (a) our righteousnesse and sanctification: and in this sense especially is Christ said to be holy in this place.

(a) 1. Cor. 1.

31.

The 7th.

Whereas Christ is sayd to be holy not

only in himselfe but for vs: here we must marke what is the principall thing in Christian Religion; namely, to haue care to bee ingrafted into Christ, that from him wee may receiue grace to become new creatures, and feele in vs his power to kill our corruptions, and dayly to renew his owne Image in vs, in righteousnesse and true holinesse; and that as truly, as wee feele in vs *Adams* corruption. It is not sufficient for vs to plead, that Christ will bee our Sauour, and will free vs from all sinnes: but wee must labour to haue Christ conuey holinesse into vs, and that as sensibly as wee see the root conuey sappe into the branches: and this holinesse wee must make to appeare in our liues, as the branches by their fruit, and leaues doe shew they receiue sappe from the root.

Secondly, here note, Christ propounds himselfe vnto vs and to all Churches, as a notable patterne to be followed; giuing vs to vnderstand, that all that beleue in him, and looke to be saued by him, must bee holy as hee is holy, making conscience of euery euill way: for Christ is holy to make vs holy. Let vs therefore behold Christ, and see wherein hee expresseth himselfe to be holy; and therein let vs follow him. So *Iohn* sayth: *Hee that hath this hope, purifieth himselfe as hee is holy*: that is, vseth all good meanes to conforme himselfe to Christs holinesse.

Thirdly, hereby wee learne, that the common title giuen to the Pope, whereby hee is called (Holinesse) is a blasphemous title: for to be holy, is here made a propretie of Christ. And yet more is giuen to the Pope, than to Christ in this place, for he is called Holinesse, which is a title of God alone.

The second propertie, whereby Christ is described, is *Truth*: Christ is said to be true, in three regards: First, because hee is without all error or ignorance, knowing euery thing as it is. Truth is in Christ properly, and in the creatures onely by meanes of him. Secondly, because whatsoever hee willet and decreeth, hee doth it seriously, without fraud, deceit, change or contradiction, as the whole tenure of Scriptures doe shew, wherein euery part is futable and agreeable to another; because hee maketh good

good every promise made in his word, for in him all the promises of God are yea, and Amen, 2. Cor. 1. 20.

The Vse.

Whereas Christ is said to be true, yea, *Truth it selfe*: First, wee learne a full difference betweene him, and all false wicked spirits, for they are spirits of error and falshood, for the diuel is the father of lyes, and the author thereof.

Againe, whereas Christ is true in all his waies, we ought without all doubting to beleue his word, & al the promises made therein, that concerne our saluation. If Christ could erre or lye, and men bee deceived by him, then they might iustly doubt of the truth of his word: but seeing hee is true in all his promises, we must beleue in him: and in all our distresses either of bodie or mind, depend vpon him: for hee hath made a promise to helpe, and hee will neuer faile them that rest on him.

Thirdly, in this propertie, hee propounds himselfe an example, to bee followed of his church and of vs, that as Christ is serious in his decrees, and constant in his promises; so must wee purpose euery good thing seriously, and also make good whatsoever good thing wee promise. For, *Liers must be destroyed*, Psalm. 5. vers. 6. *They that lye, or make lyes, must neuer come into heauen, but bee sent out thence, and cast into the burning lake of fire and brimstone*, Reuel. 2. 15. But it is a note of a man, that is a good member of Gods church in this world, and that shall bee inheritor of Christs kingdome in heauen, to *speake the truth from his heart*, Psalm. 15. vers. 2. And lying is a note of the child of the diuell, Iohn 8. vers. 44.

Secondly, Christ is described, by his kingly office, *Which hath the keyes of Dauid, which openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth*. Where first, let vs see the meaning of the words: For which purpose we must haue recourse to *Isay 22. vers. 22*. whence these words are borrowed, beeing there said of *Eliachim*. The circumstances of the text will easily shew the meaning of the words in this place: *Shebna*, who had beene an auntient Steward to many of the Kings of Israel, was Treasurer also vnto King *Hozekias*: And because he was an hinderer

of reformation intended by *Hozekias*, the Lord threatned to cast him out of his office: and further, the Lord signifieth that *Eliachim* shall come in his room and haue the same office: now to expresse this thing, the Lord saith, *The keyes of the house of Dauid shall bee laid vpon his shoulders*: That is, *Eliachim* shall be made a Steward of the house of *Dauid*, euen of the kingdome of *Dauid*, whereof *Hozekias* was gouernour: (for so the house of Iuda, and the house of Israel, are often put for the whole kingdome of Iuda and Israel.) And the giuing of a key was an antient token of placing and inuesting men in chiefe rule and authoritie; so that the meaning of this place, is this: that God hath giuen vnto Christ soueraigne power and authoritie of gouerning his Church. *Quest.* But why is Christ sayd to haue the key of *Dauid*, for *Dauids* kingdome was a temporall kingdome, but Christs kingdom is not of this world *Iohn 18. 36*. And yet it is said, *The Lord God shall giue vnto him the throne of his father Dauid: and hee shall raigne ouer the house of Iacob*, Luke 1. 32. 33. *Ans.* Christ may bee said to haue the keyes of *Dauid* two wayes: First, properly; for when he was borne of the blessed virgin *Mary*, hee was borne King of the Iewes, by right descent from his father *Dauid*, as his Genealogie plainly sheweth Luke 3. And also the question of the wise men at Ierusalem, saying: *Where is the king of the Iewes that is borne?* Mat. 2. 2. And therefore when the Publicans asked tribute of him, hee pleaded the priuiledge of a kings sonne: albeit, to auoid offence, he was content to yeeld of his right, and to pay tribute; Thereby shewing, that he had right to the kingdome of Israel, though he would not take it vpon him; and therefore came in such a time when the kingdome was taken of the Roman Emperour. Secondly, he may be said to haue the key of *Dauids* kingdome, typically; for *Dauids* kingdome was a figure of Christs kingdome, and *Dauid* himselfe a type of Christ: as it is most excellently deciphered in the Prophets, *Ier. 23. 5. & Hosea 3. 5*. where Christ is plainly called *Dauid*, by the name of him that was his type, signe, & figure. *Quest.* Why were not as well the kingdomes of

Nebuchadnezzar and *Pharaoh*, types of Christs kingdom, as *Dauids*? *Ans.* Because *Dauids* kingdome, was a kingdom of light and pietie; but theirs were kingdomes of sinne and iniquitie. And hee is said to haue the key of *Dauids* kingdom, because his kingdome and the righteoufnesse thereof, was figured by the pietie in *Dauids* kingdom. And this kind of speaking is iustificable by Gods word. So *Mat. 2. 23*. Christ is called a Nazarite: which place hath relation to that which is said properly of *Sampson* (e) who was a most excellent figure of Christ, and did most notably represent him in his death, wherein hee killed more than in his life. Now Christ is called an Nazarite, not because he obserued their rites & orders, for that he did not: hee dranke wine, so did not the Nazarites: but because hee was the truth, and substance of that order: for in him was fully accomplished that holiness, which was figured by that order; for he was perfectly seuered from all sinne and pollution. And so here hee is said to haue the key of *Dauid*, because he had the soueraigntie which was figured by *Dauids* kingdome.

(e) *Iudg. 13.*

Which shutteth and no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth. Here Christs kingdome is compared to a house, which can bee opened and shut, by none but Christ; whereby is signified, that none hath power aboue Christ in his kingdome, and that his power therein, is soueraigne and absolute. So that hereby is meant, that Christ Iesus sitting in heauen, hath soueraigne power and authoritie ouer the whole Church of God, to gouerne the same. That we may the better vnderstand this soueraigne power of Christ, we must know, it hath three parts. I. To prescribe. II. To iudge. III. To saue, or destroy. In Prescribing, Christ hath absolute power, and that in sundry things: as first, in prescribing doctrines of faith, and religion vnto his church, to be beleeued and obeyed, and that on pain of damnation. This power he puts in execution, when in the bookes of the old and new Testament, hee prescribeth the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell, to be obeyed and beleeued. And none but he can make an Article of faith, or a law to bind the conscience: and therefore

Paul saith, *Whosoever shall teach any other doctrine, than that which yee haue received of vs, let him be accursed*, *Gal. 1. 8*. Secondly, for regiment; he hath absolute power to prescribe how hee will haue his church gouerned, and by whom: and therefore *Moses*, when he was to make the Tabernacle, (d) *did all things according to the patterne that the Lord gaue vnto him*. So *Dauid* gaue to *Salomon* patternes of all things that were in him, by the Spirit, touching the building of the house of God, *1. Chr. 28. 12*. Thirdly, he hath absolute power to appoint the time of keeping his Sabaoth: for as the ordaining of a Sabaoth belongs to Christ, so doth the changing thereof; he that prescribeth worship, must prescribe the ordinarie set time therunto, which is to continue to the end. And therefore it is but an opinion of men, to hold that the church may make two or moe Sabaoth daies in a week, if they will. Fourthly, *In prescribing the Sacraments*; & therefore (e) *Paul* saith, *What I haue received of the Lord, that deliuer I vnto you*: speaking of the Lords Supper. For hee that giues grace, must also appoint the signes and seales of grace.

(d) *Exod. 32. 42. 43. Heb. 8. 5.*(e) *1. Cor. 11. 23.*

The second part of Christs soueraigne power, is power of iudgement: which is a soueraigne power to determine on his owne will, without the consent of others, or submission to men or Angels. And in determining, Christ hath two priuiledges. First, to expound scripture; the absolute power of expounding the law, belongeth to the Law-giuer; and his exposition is authentically. Secondly, to determine of all questions, and controuersies in Scripture. And therefore it is a wicked opinion of the church of Rome, which hold, that the principall Iudge of interpreting Scripture, and decyding controuersies, is the church.

The third part of Christs soueraigne power, is to saue, and destroy. This is expressed in these words: *Hee openeth and no man shutteth, & shutteth and no man openeth*; and for this cause he is said (f) to *haue the keyes of hell and of death*. Whereby is signified; first, that he hath power to forgive sins: for that hee procureth at his Fathers hands. Secondly, that hee hath power to condemne: for when men beleue not his word, hee hath power to hold

(f) *Ren. 1. 18*

hold them in their sins, for which he can cast them into hell. The ground of this threefold power of Christ is this, because he is soueraigne Lord over his Church, and the members thereof.

The Church of Rome saith, That this key of *Dauid*, hath more in it than soueraignie ouer his church: to wit, a power to make and depose kings that be in his Church. This they teach, that they might prouoe the Pope to haue title in ordaining and deposing of kings, by vertue of the keyes. But they erre grossly; for thogh Christ as he is Mediatour, bee aboue all kings, yet in that regard hee neither maketh nor depose any kings: and therefore he saith plainly, (a) *My kingdome is not of this world.* This caused him to refuse to take vpon him the office of an earthly

(a) Ioh. 18. 36

(b) Lu. 12. 14.

(c) Ioh. 8. 11.

(d) Pro. 8. 15.

The power of the keyes.

Judge or prince, to (b) *diuide an inheritance betwene two brethren.* Hence it was, that he (c) *refused to giue sentence of the adulterous woman.* And yet as Christ is God, he maketh or depose any earthly kings: so the wife man speaketh of him in the person of wisdom: (d) *By me kings raigne.*

For the further cleering of this, we must handle another point, which is deliuered hence, concerning *the power of the keyes*: which is a power whereby the power of the keyes of *Dauid* is put in execution. This power of the keyes is mentioned Mat. 16. 19. when Christ saith vnto Peter, *I will giue vnto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heauen, and whatsoeuer thou shalt bind vpon earth, shall be bound in heauen; and whatsoeuer thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heauen.* This power of the keyes, is a ministerie granted to Gods Church, to open and shut the kingdome of heauen. First, I call it a *Ministerie*: that is, a seruice, because whatsoever the church doth in Christs name, is nothing but the dutie of seruants vnto their Lord: from whence it is, that the most worthy members and officers that euer were in the Church, as the Prophets and Apostles, were but the Ministers of Christ. That this is a seruice, I shew more plainly thus; When *Adam* fell, in his sinne all mankind fell with him, and thereby were all barred from the kingdome of heauen. Now since that fall, Christ became man, and in his manhood satisfied the iustice of God for mans sins. And this satisfaction of Christ, is properly that key whereby heauen is ope-

ned, being opposit to mans sin whereby it was shut. And Gods church and Ministers cannot properly open heauen by any power they haue; but onely reueale vnto men what Christ hath done for them; and withall apply vnto them, the doctrine of Christs satisfaction which is reuealed. And in this regard they are said to open and shut the kingdome of heauen; not as Lords, but as ministers and seruants.

Next I adde, that this power is *giuen to the Church*: that is, to the company of true belceuers called to saluation by Christ, and to none other: and therefore it is said of them, (e) *Whatsoeuer you bind on earth, shall be bound in heauen &c.* (e) Mat. 18. 8

Thirdly, I adde the end of this power of the keyes: *To open and to shut heauen.* How the church doth this, Christ that gaue this power knoweth best, and hee hath set it downe, Ioh. 20. 23. *Whosoever sinnes you remitt, they are remitted: and whosoever sinnes you retaine, they are retained.* The church therefore opens heauen, when it pardons mens sinnes: and it shuts the same, when it lawfully retaines their sinnes, and holdeth them vnpardoned: besides this, there is no opening & shutting of heauen committed to the church. *Quest.* Can the church pardon sinne, or retaine the same? *Ans.* Yes, for these are the words of Christ: but let vs see how. It is one thing to giue sentence of the pardon of sinne, and another to pronounce the same sentence giuen. To giue the sentence of the pardon of sinne, is oriey proper to Christ, the head of the Church; no Saint, nor Angell, hath that priuiledge: but yet the church pronounceth the sentence of pardon giuen by Christ. If we should say, the church shuld pardon sinne, wee should rob Christ of his honour, for that is a priuiledge of his Godhead. Thus wee see what the power of the keyes is.

The right vse of this power, is when the church doth vse the same for the opening and shutting of heauen: First, in the name of Christ alone, as a seruant; Secondly, according to the rule of Gods word; not after mens affections or inuentions; Thirdly, for this end, to bring sinners to repentance; & to continue them therein that they may be saved: and to the Church thus vsing this power, Christ hath

hath promised: that *Whatsoever they bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever they loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*, Mat. 18. 18.

Further, this power of the keyes, hath two parts: the ministry of the word, and spirituall iurisdiction. The key of the ministry of the word, is set downe & established by Christ, Mat. 16. 19. *I will give unto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heaven, &c.* This ministry of the word is a key, because it opens & shuts heauen; this it doth two wayes. First, by teaching and explaining the substance of religion, the doctrine of saluation, whereby men must come to heauen; & in that regard, is called *the key of knowledge*, Lu. 11. 52. Secondly, by applying the promises of the Gospel, and the threatening of the Law: For when in the ministry of the word, the promises of remission of sins & life everlasting, are applied to beleeuers that repent, then the kingdome of heauen is opened: & when as in the same ministry of the word, the curses of the law are denounced against impenitent sinners, then is the kingdome of heauen shut. Yet touching the ministry of the word, this distinction must be remembered; that otherwhiles the church is certaine of the faith and repentance of some men, or some congregation; and then they may pronounce remission of sins absolutely: but otherwhiles they are vncertaine of their faith and repentance, or of their impenitencie; & then they must accordingly remit or retaine mens sins, that is, conditionally; pronouncing the remission of sins to all that repent: & denouncing damnation to all that repent not: And thus is the word to bee publikely handled in Gods church at this day, because our congregations are mixt companies, consisting of some that repent and beleue, and of others that doe not truly repent nor beleue.

The second part of this power of the keyes, is *spirituall iurisdiction*: I call it *spirituall*, to distinguish it from that outward iurisdiction whereby the commonwealth is gouerned. That this spirituall iurisdiction is a *key*, may appeare, Mat. 18. 16. 17. 18. *If thy brother offend thee (saith Christ) admonish him privately: if he heare thee not, yet take with thee two or threes, &c. if he heare not them, tell it to the Church: if he*

refuse to heare the Church, let him bee unto thee as an heathen man, and as a Publican. Then followeth the promise, *Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose, shall be loosed in heaven.*

This spirituall iurisdiction, is a power whereby the church pronounceth sentence vpon the obstinat offenders in the church, and puts the same in execution. And it hath two parts: Excommunication, and Absolution. Excommunication is an action of the Church in Christs name, excluding an obstinat offender that is a professor of the Gospel, from all the priuiledges of the Church, & from the kingdome of heaven. So Paul (a) commadeth the incestu-

(a) 1. Cor. 5. 5

ous man to be committed to Satan: that is, not onely put out of the kingdome of Christ, but also after a sort made subiect vnto Satan, to bee outwardly afflicted by him. And therefore Christ saith: *If (b) he heare not the Church, let him bee unto thee as an heathen man*: that is, as one that hath no title to the kingdome of heauen. Here may some say, Can the church thrust any man out of the kingdome of heauen? *Ans.* It is Christ onely that receiueh men thither, and it is hee alone that must thrust them out: the church doth not properly either receiue men in, or put them out; but onely pronounce and declare what Christ doth in this behalfe. As if a man that liues in the church bee a common drunkard; the church finding in Gods word, that (c) *no drunkard can inherit the kingdome of heaven*, which is the sentence of Christ, may pronounce the same against him, and so exclude him from the kingdome of heauen.

(b) Mat. 18. 17

Obiect. The true child of god may be excommunicated, but he can neuer bee excluded from the kingdome of heauen; *Ans.* The true child of God may for a time, and in part bee excluded the kingdome of heauen. In part; as a man that hath freedome in an incorporation, may lie in prison for some trespasses, and so want the vse of his freedome, though hee be a free-man: so the child of God, for committing sin, may want the vse of his libertie and freedome which hee hath in Gods kingdome; and for a time, while he liueth in sinne without repentance: yet wholly and for euer hee cannot; but so soone as he repents, he shall bee receiued

(c) 1 Cor. 6. 10.

certainly

certainly againe: for no man is to be barred either from heaven or the church, any longer than he remaineth impenitent.

The 7th.

Wheras this censure is such, as doth exclude a man both from the kingdome of heaven and the liberties of the church till he repent; we may here see, that this censure ought to be vsed with great reuerence, feare, & consideration: euen such or greater, as we would vse in the cutting of a member from the bodie. The abusing therfore of this sentence in small matters cannot but be a grievous sin, & a breach of the third commandement, wherein one of Gods most weightie ordinances is taken in vaine.

Further, one special degree of Excommunication is *Anathema*: which is, when one is pronounced to be condemned, whereof *Paul* speaketh, *1. Cor. 16. 2. 2*. But this is not pronounced vpon any, but on those that sin against the holy Ghost, and therefore it is seldom vsed because that sin is hardly discerned: consistling not so much in the speech, as in the malice of the heart against Christ.

The second part of this spiritual iurisdiction, is absolutio: which is, when a malefactor vpon his sufficient repentence is approved to be a member of the church; & is admitted to the kingdom of heauē. And yet here the church receiues him not into the kingdome of Christ, but onely declareth vpon his repentance what Christ doth: & thus we see wherein Ecclesiastical iurisdiction consisteth: and what bee the parts of the power of the keyes.

For the better discerning of this power of the keyes, we must remember foure speciall abuses hereof that haue taken place in Gods church for many hundred yeres. The first is this: that in former ages the church hath given this power of the keyes to *Peter* alone, debarring the same from all other, euen from the rest of the Apostles; as though they had onely the vse, not the right of this power. But the case is plain, this power belongs to every true minister of the Gospel, though they be not Apostles, as well as it did to *Peter*; for in the promulgation of this power, *Mat. 16. 19*. though Christ direct his speech to *Peter*, yet he speaketh vnto all, as the circumstances of the place doe plainly shew; for Christs question (*Whom say youe that I am*) was made to all; now because it

would haue bin greater disorder in that holy company, for all of them to haue spoken; therefore *Peter* being both anti-ent & bold of speech speaketh for al, and the rest answered in his person: & so accordingly Christ speaking to *Peter*, doth make a grant of this power vnto all his disciples in his person. And therefore *Ioh. 20. 23*. hee giues this power to all; saying plainly, *Whosoever youe retaine, they are retained, &c.* So that the word of God is plaine in this point, to satisfie the conscience of any that is not wilfully addicted to the Popish religion. *Quest.* Whence haue the ministers of the Gospell this power? *Ans.* By succession from the Apostles; for Christ saith, *Mat. 28. 19. 20. Goe & preach, I wil bee with you to the end of the world.* Where he cannot meane the Apostles onely; but with them all ministers that did preach and baptise after them, making this promise to the Apostles, not as they were Apostles, but as they were ministers and preachers of his Gospell.

The second abuse is, that the church of Rome, hath turned the power of the keyes into a supremacie ouer the church, making it to be a foueraign authority, whereby *Peter*, & his successors the popes, haue liberty to make laws, canons, & constitutions which bind the conscience; as also to make kings & to depose the same. A most notorious abuse of this power, which is no superiority but a ministrie: the chief power whereof, consisteth in the dispensatio of the word, & wil of Christ: For Christ said not to *Peter*, I wil giue thee the keyes of the kingdoms of men, but of the kingdom of heauē. The third abuse hereof is, that the church of Rome, hath thereby for 1000. yeres almost, barred kings, queenes, and emperours from being gouernours ouer the churches of God: an error flat against scripture; for when as good king *Iosias* intended the reformation of religion, & the abandoning of Idolatry, hee made a couenant with the Lord for the accomplishment of the same: & is said (*a*) to haue caused all that were in *Ierusalem*, & *Beniamin* to stand to the couenant which he made. Now shall wee say *Iosias* did euill in causing them so to doe? God forbid: It is recorded of him by the holy Ghost for his commendation. *Obiection.* But Gods Pastors and teachers haue the power of the keyes, and princes

princes haue not? *Ans.* True; but yet they haue a ciuil power wherby they rule ouer Gods church: for there is a ciuill power, & a spirituall power. Princes rule not by any spirituall power, but ciuilly: & thereby they haue power to compell all their subiects to the outward meanes of Gods worship, & to forsake Idolatry, and may also punish those that obey them not. *Obiect.* By this power of the keyes, Kings and Queens are brought vnder Pastors? *Ans.* In Pastors and Ministers we must consider their persons & goods, & their office and word which they bring: Princes are ouer their persons and goods, and yet may bee vnder their word and ministerie: because therein they stand in Christs stead. Yet all this sheweth nothing why Princes in Gods church should bee so robbed of their right, as the church of Rome doth.

The fourth abuse is, that the church of Rome for some 800. yeares, hath turned the power of the keyes vnto the Priests in their Sacrament of Penance: for whereas by Gods word, the Ministers power is onely to pronounce the absolution of Christ: with them euery Priest fits as a Iudge, and all the people come vnto him as to a Iudge, making knowne vnto him all their thoughts, words, and deeds, (as neere as they can) wherein they haue broken any commaundement: which done, the priest enioins him to bewaile his finnes, & after contrition, doth properly giue sentence of pardon, euen as Christ himselfe doth: and then after appoints him workes of satisfaction, to be done for the temporal punishment of his finnes: which done, his sins are pardoned in heauen. Where behold a most diuellish practise, as may appeare by the manifold errours contained therein. As first; the confession of all a mans finnes; which hath no warrant in Gods word.

Secondly, that the Priest should giue sentence of pardon, is a most notorious practise, whereby Christ is robbed of his honor: for the Pharisees could say, *None can forgive sins but God*, that is properly, *Mark 2.7.* Which Christ approoueth, & it is most true; for he that can forgive sins properly, must make satisfaction for sins. Thirdly, they absolue from the fault, but they will not forgive the punishment; and thereby they robbe others to enrich

themselves. Fourthly they enioyne satisfaction to God by men for their finnes: wherby they do nothing els but ouerturn the al-sufficient satisfaction of Christ, and enioine that to man which is impossible. All these are most horrible abuses of this power, which ought to bee knowne and considered, being a sufficient warrant vnto vs, that the church of Rome is no true church of God: for though the pope carrie in his armes *the keyes*, yet they are not *the keyes of heauen but of hell.* For hee hath made moe places of rest and woe, than euer God did: as *Lumbus patrum, & Purgatorium*, & therefore must needs make moe doores thither, and so moe locks & keyes.

By this doctrine, touching the *keyes of The Vjs* *David* giuen to Christ, and the power of the keyes in the church deriued thence, wee may learne sundry things. First, that Christ, who hath the keyes of *David* to open and shut, doth not open to all, but to some onely. The reason hereof is this: *Adam* beeing created in integritie, was in the fauour of God: but by his sin he lost the fauour of God, and so barred himselfe both out of the earthly and heavenly paradise: and all his posteritie by the same sin, and by their owne actuell sins are likewise debarred: for (a) *sinne is a partition wall betwene vs and God: and a (b) cloud betwene our prayers and God himselfe*, as *Jeremie* speaketh: so that sinne is the cause of this exclusion: and so many sins as a man committeth, so many bolts and barres hee maketh to exclude himselfe from the kingdome of heauen. The consideration whereof, should moue euery one to take a narrow view of his miserable state in himselfe, through *Adam*: for by original sin wherein wee were borne, and by our actual transgressions wherein we liue, we barre our selfe from the kingdome of heauen. It is lamentable to see how the whole world lyeth in sinne, and how the diuell bewitcheth men to conceale or diminish their sins, making great finnes small, and little finnes none at all; when as the least sinne which they commit (without repentance) is sufficient to barre them for euer out of the kingdome of heauen. Againe, seeing euery sinne doth barre vs out of heauen, this must be a motiue, to induce euery one of vs, to repent of all our finnes, to bewaile the same, & to pray earnestly for the pardon of

(a) *Iay 59.2.*
(b) *Lam. 3.44.*

of them in the death of Christ: and continually to labor to turne vnto God from all sinne, because if wee liue but in one sinne, it will bee a mightie barre sufficient to exclude vs the Kingdome of heauen eternally. Thirdly, seeing Christ keeps the keyes of heauen; hereby wee are taught to come vnto Christ, & to seek by him to enter into the kingdom of heauen. For Christ by his death hath opened heauen: as he said vnto Nathaniell & Phi-

(4) Ioh. 1. 51. *lip. (a) Verity, verily, I say vnto you, hereafter shall yee see heauen open*: meaning by the ministerie of the Gospell: and seeing it is open, we must strue to enter into it, as the men in *Iohn Baptists* time did, Mat. 11. 12. This wee do by endeavouring to become good members of Gods church on earth: for that is the dore and suburbs of the kingdome of heauen, which euery one must enter into, that would come to heauen it selfe; euen as a man that would goe into a house, must needs come to the dore. Now in the church there is the true dore which is Christ himselfe, and the key thereof which is his word, and the ministerie of the word, which doth locke and vnlocke the same. *Quest.* What shall we doe to become true members of the Church? *Ans.* We must do two things: First, humble our selues for all our sinnes, praying vnto God for the pardon of them, and beleueing the same through Christ. Secondly, endeauour & purpose by Gods grace euery day to leaue the same sinnes. This doing, wee are at the doore of heauen, and if wee would haue our soules enter into heauen when wee die, this we must doe while we liue. But if we enter not into the dore of grace, by the key of knowledge in the ministry of the word while we liue, wee shall neuer come to the gate of glorie after death.

Vers. 8. *I know thy workes: behold, I haue set before thee an open doore; and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

In this verse, and so forward to the twelfth, is contained the matter of this Epistle, which may bee reduced to three heads: a Praise, a Promise, and a Commaundement. The Praise in this eight verse, The Promise in the 9. and 10. The

Commaundement in the 11. For the first, the Praise of this Church is first summarily propounded: *I know thy workes*: which hath beene expounded, and the end thereof, with the vses in the former Epistles. Then hee addeth the reason of his comendation, wherein are two things to bee obserued. I. the signe of Christs approbation, in these words: *I haue set before thee an open doore*. II. their conuersation, or the workes which Christ approoued, in the words following, *Thou hast a little strength, & hast kept my word, & hast not denied my name*. Both these may be vnderstood, either of the Angell and Minister of this Church; or of the whole Church also. Itake it to bee meant of both. Being spoken of the Minister of this Church, the words beare this sence: *Behold I haue set before thee an open doore, &c.* That is, behold and consider, I haue vouchsafed vnto thee opportunitie & libertie to preach the Gospell, and thereby to conuert men vnto mee. So much *S. Paul* meaneth by the *dore of vnterance*, 1. Cor. 16. 9. *For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denyed my name*. That is, though thou bee indued but with a small measure of gifts pertaining to thy calling, yet thou hast maintained my Gospell, and hast not denyed my name.

These words being thus expounded, doe afford vs these instructions. First, from the signe of his approbation wee learne: that it is a great priuledge for any Minister to haue liberty to preach the Gospell, and thereby to conuert men vnto Christ: so much the word of attention *behold* importeth, which may also further appeare by this, that the most famous and worthy Prophets of God, were not alwaies vouchsafed this fauour, as *Isay* and *Ezechiel*: who were sent sometime to *harden (b) the people*. And Christ himselfe complaineth of the want of this priuledge, saying (c) *I haue spent my strength in vaine*: and in regard of this priuledge, the Ministers of the Gospel are called (d) *Sanctifiers*. And by reason of this libertie, they haue title to the promise of *shining, as stars in Glorie*, Dan. 12. 3. This therefore is an vnspcakable mercie, and so ought to bee esteemed: and all Ministers that haue the same vouchsafed vnto them ought highly to magnifie the name of God,

(b) Isay 6. 9.

(c) Iſa. 49. 4.

(d) Obad. 21.
1. Tim. 4. 10.

God for it, and to value it more worth, than all earthly blessings whatsoeuer.

Secondly, from the workes which Christ approued in the Angell of this Church, we may obserue, that Ministers indued with small measure of gifts, may bee able to doe great seruice vnto God in his Church. This thing is plaine in the Minister of this Church: and might also bee shewed by manifold examples of such men in all ages: but to come to our times. In the daies of Queene *Marie*, when Religion was in banishing, this our famous Schoole of the Prophets, had many learned men in it; yet not one of them stood out for the defence of the Gospell: when as a poore secular Priest not three miles off, who was far behind them in gifts of learning and knowledge, yet hauing the truth reuealed vnto him, did stand out for the maintenance of the same, euen to the sealing of it with his blood. And at this day many men of smaller gifts in the ministrie, doe more further the Gospell, by the encrease of the knowledge of Christ crucified and true obedience, than those that are enriched with far greater gifts of knowledge both in tongues and Arts: so as though they be many hundred degrees short in regard of schoole-learning, yet they goe as farre before them in benefiting Gods Church.

If this be so (will some say) then it is needlesse for men to be brought vp so much in the schooles of learning? *Ans.* Not so, for as much as may bee, Gods Ministers ought to haue knowledge of Schoole-learning, both in Artes and tongues. And yet for all this, it oft cometh to passe by Gods prouidence, that the greatest Clerks for learning, are lesse profitable to the Church, than men of smaller gifts. This God doth to humble the learned, that they bee not proud in themselves: And to magnifie the worke of his spirit in the weaker instruments.

Further, these words must also be vnderstood of the whole Church: and then they beare this sence, *I haue set before thee an open doore*: That is, I haue vouchsafed vnto thee a speciall priuledge, euen libertie to enter into the kingdome of heauen. From whence we obserue: *That libertie to life everlasting, is a speciall priuledge belonging not to all men, but onely to*

the Church of God, and the true members of Christ.

This point hath sundry vses. I. to confute this erronious opinio: That Christ did effectually redeeme all and euery man. Which is flat against Gods word, and this text: for those that are effectually redeemed, haue libertie to enter into the kingdome of heauen: but all men haue not that libertie; for then it were no priuledge of Gods Church alone, to haue heauen opened vnto them.

II. Seeing this is a priuledge which god vouchsafeth vnto his church, to haue heauen gate opened vnto them. Hereby we are taught to take the benefite of this libertie while the doore is open: and in time to strue to enter therein. For as Christ telleth *Nathaniell*, the Church of the new Testament, *shall by faith see heauen open*. We must not therefore neglect this oportunitie. But it is our common shame, that wee be slacke in seeking the kingdome of God, and the righteousness thereof, suffering our selues so to bee clogged with heaps of sinne, and worldly lusts, that we can neither walke in that strait way, nor enter into that doore that leadeth vnto life; for sinne is an heauie burden, like a great packe that will not suffer a man to enter into so strait a doore. We must therefore cast off all sin, that we may so enter in, and walke in the way of life.

And no man can shut it. Here is the continuance of the former benefit, against all aduersarie power whatsoeuer. And this againe confuteth another opinion of the same kinde with the former: to wit, That Christ dyed for euery man, but yet some are not saued, because they wil not; they shut heauen doore against themselves. But this opinion cannot stand: for *none can shut heauen* doore against them, to whom Christ hath set it open effectually, neither sinne, Satan, nor the world, nor not man himselfe, nor all their power together. For herein is the will of man ruled by the will of God: and looke whom God will haue to enter into heauen, them doth hee encline to will their owne saluation; and also make vnwilling euer to shut this doore against themselves. *For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, &c.* That is, Thou art indued with some measure of grace, as of faith, hope,

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bridge.

(a) Iohn. 1. 91

hope, and righteousness: and according to that measure thou hast maintained my word, and not denied my name.

Hence we learn, that a man indued with a small measure of Gods grace, may doe works pleasing vnto god, & by the same grace cometo life euerlasting. Christ saith

(*) Mat. 17. 30

to his Disciples; (a) *If your faith were as much as a graine of mustard seed, by it should you bee able to remove mountaines.* Now

that which is here said of the faith of miracles, may in like sort be said of all faith, and so of iustifying faith; if a man haue neuer so small a measure thereof, yet thereby hee shall doe workes acceptable to God: for as Paul teacheth, Gods children

(*) Rom. 8. 23.

receiue, not the tenths, but (b) *the first fruits of the spirit*; that is, a small measure of grace in this life, which is, onely a pledge of that which they shall fully receiue in the world to come; for this cause is Ra-

(*) Heb. 11. 31

hab commended for her faith, (c) although it was but small and weake, as wee shall see if wee read the whole History, *Iosua.*

2: For God accepteth of man, according to that hee hath receiued. It is not so much the measure of grace that saueth a man, as the truth of grace before God.

N. B.

The Vjs.

This serueth notably for the comfort of those that haue care to keepe faith & good conscience. Such are most dismaied by reason of their wants & corruptions: but they must know that God approoueth of their grace, though it bee but small, if so be they haue care to increase in grace, and doe strue to please God in all things, according to the measure of grace receiued. II. Hereby euerie one must be encouraged to embrace & obey true Religion. Many bee dismaied herein, by reason of the great measure of obedience, which they thinke God requireth; and therefore they leaue of all obedience. But this ought not to bee so: for God approoueth of a man in Christ, according to that grace which hee hath, be it more or lesse; and not according to that which by the law he ought to haue. And yet none of all this must make vs slacke and negligent in vsing those means which God hath vouchsafed vnto vs for the increase of grace, that so wee may also increase in true obedience.

And hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Here hee setteth downe two workes; for the which he commen-

deth his church. First, their faithfull keeping of the word of Christ; Secondly, the profession of his name in the time of persecution. This behaviour of this Church, must be a patterne & a looking glasse for vs to square our conuersation by. For these words; *Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*; though the words be few, they conteine much in them: signifying, that this Church had speciall care of keeping Gods word in euerie Commaundement, both legall, and euangelicall. Happie were our Church if the same might truly be said of vs, that we had care of obedience vnto God, and of the true profession of his name. But generally we fail in practise, though in outward profession we make some shew thereof. Thus much of the praise of this Church.

Verf. 9. *Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which call themselves Iewes, and are not, but doe lye; behold, I will make them, that they shall come and worship before thy feete, and shall know that I haue loued thee.*

Here followes the second part of this Epistle; namely, the promises of Christ, which are two. First, concerning the conuersion of certaine Iewes, verf. 9. Secondly, concerning the deliuerance of these *Philadelphians* in the time of temptation, verf. 10. For the first of these promises: In all likelyhood, there was in this Citie of *Philadelphia*, a Synagogue of the Iewes which bare an outward shewe, that they were the true worshippers of God; albeit they denied the name of Christ, and persecuted his Church. Yet Christ here promiseth, that he will conuert them, and make them members of his Church, and cause them to worship him in the congregation before this Church of *Philadelphia*.

In this promise, note three points touching the conuersion of these Iewes. The Author thereof: The partie conuerted; and the fruit of their conuersion. For the first: (saith Christ) *Behold, I will make them.* The words are very significant, being doubled; and they make Christ whole and sole author of their conuersion.

Hence we learne, that in the conuer-

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fion of a sinner, God hath the whole and sole worke: true it is, that a man willet his conuersion in the act thereof, but yet it is God that worketh that will in him, it is not of himselfe. This confuteth the erroneous Doctrine of free-will in the Church of Rome, whereby they teach, that a man can dispose himselfe to worke out his saluation, being onely helped by Gods grace. Like vnto a sicke man, who though he bee weake, yet being holden vp by another, can goe of himselfe. *Ans.* But saint *Paul* teacheth vs, That a man by nature is not sick, or weak with sinne, but stark (a) *dead in sinne*: and can no more moue himselfe in the work of his conuersion, than a dead man in the graue, in the work of his resurrection. But they say, by this we make a man like vnto a blocke. *Ans.* Not so, for though he cannot turne himselfe vnto God, yet he hath his will and vnderstanding free to vse in ciuile and outward actions: and besides there is a possibilitie in his nature to bee conuerted by grace, which is not in a blocke.

(a) Ephes. 2. 1.

Again, whereas Christ saith, *I wil make them come, and they shall come*. Here is plainly confuted the Doctrine and opinion of some, which hold, That a man being effectually called, may come vnto Christ, or not come at his pleasure; when God hath giuen grace, man may receiue it, or refuse it, if hee will. This is flat against this text, for *God will make them come*, and mans will must bee plyable to Gods will in this matter.

But they alledge, *Mat. 23. 37. Ob Ierusalem, Ierusalem, how oft would I haue gathered thee, as a hen, &c. but thou wouldest not.* *Ans.* Christ there speaketh not of the wil of his good pleasure, for that cannot be resisted; But of his signified will in the ministerie of his Prophets, and by himselfe as hee was a Prophet, and the Minister of circumcision vnto the Iews: for so he might wil their conuersion, and yet they will it not. *Obiect. 2. Act. 7. 51. Resisty-necked Iewes, ye haue alwaies resisted the holy Ghost.* *Ans.* That must be vnderstood of the ministerie of the Prophets and Apostles, who spake by the spirit of God: and not of the spirit himselfe.

II. point. The parties conuerted, namely, *Them of the Synagogue of Satan*, Such as

called themselves the onely true worshippers of God, and yet indeed and in truth, were no better than the slaues of Satan.

This is to be obserued: for hereby we may see, that not onely sinners which commit small finnes, are conuerted vnto God; but euen grieuous and auncient sinners: such as haue long continued the slaues of Satan. Christ died not for painted sinners, but for grieuous sinners: and therefore *Paul* chargeth *Tymothy* and the Ministers with him, (b) *To waite for the conuersion and repentance of them that were taken in the snare of the Diuell, and that according to the Diuels owne will.* *Rom. 1. 28.* *Paul* speaketh of some Gentils that were giuen vnto a reprobate sence: which was a fearefull case, and yet no doubt, many of them were after turned to beleue the Gospell; for such are they that are taken in the snare of the Diuell, and yet there is repentance to be waited for of them.

(b) 2. Tim. 2. 26.

This Doctrine must not bee abused to libertie in sinning; for that is the right way to cast our soules into the pit of destruction. But yet seeing Christ wil bring home into his kingdome most grieuous sinners, we must hereby take occasion not to bee discouraged, either by the greatnesse or multitude of our sins from coming vnto Christ. For marke, Christ onely raised three that were dead to life: *Lazrus* daughter that was new dead: the widowes sonne that lay on the herse; and *Lazarus* that lay sinking in the graue. This is a notable figure of conuersion of sinners: hee will not onely call to repentance small and young sinners, but euen great and old sinners that lyerrotting and sinking in the graue of sinne, as *Lazarus* did in the graue of death. Hee came to call sinners to repentance, and to saue the lost sheepe, which are readie to bee deuoured by Woolues and wilde beasts. Wee must all blesse the name of Christ for this large mercie, and in time lay hold vpon it, and repent.

The Vse.

III. point. The fruit of their conuersion, in these wordes: *They shall come and worshippe before thy seate and shall knowe that I haue loued thee*. These wordes may bee fitly expounded by another place of Scripture, *1. Corinth. 14. 24. 25. If all prophesie, and there come in one that beleueth not, or one vnlearned,*

learned, he is rebuked of all men, and iudged of all, so as the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and hee will fall downe on his face, and worship God, and say plainly, God is in you indeed: so that the meaning of these words is this: I will cause them to come to the congregation of Gods people, and at their feet to fall downe and worship the true God.

Here are set downe two notable fruits of the conuersion of a sinner. First, concerning God: The second, concerning the Church. The fruit of conuersion that respecteth God is, *The true worship of God* noted in these words: *I will make them come and worship*; that is, *In spirit and truth with bodie and soule, to adore the true God.* This fruit no man can bring forth till he be conuerted: For (a) *the wicked and naturall man calls not vpon God.* True it is, they will acknowledge there is a God, & that the same God is to bee worshipped, and therefore they will come outwardly, and heare the word, and receiue the elements of the sacraments: but the true worship of God, is in spirit and truth from the heart, which a naturall man cannot performe vnto God. This is the fruit of true conuersion, which when a man receiueth he doth heare the word of God with reuerence, tremble at Gods iudgements, & mingle the Doctrine of the Gospel with faith in his heart; and in calling vpon God hee feelles his sinnes, and therefore by prayer doth earnestly desire the supply of grace, and the remission of his sinns; hauing his heart also beleeuing that hee shall receiue mercie: And in thanksgiving his heart is filled with ioy, and the grace of thankfulnesse: so as being conuerted, all his worship vnto Gods is in spirit and truth.

In the worship of these Iewes, are noted three properties required in Gods seruice. First, it must bee willing and cheerefull: so did these Iewes worship God: For they are said, not onely *to worship God*, but *to come and worship God*: and thus doe al Gods children worship him. *If 7. 56. 7.* Those whome God bringeth to his mountaine, he maketh ioyfull in his house of prayer. *Psal. 110. 3.* *They shall come willingly on the day of assemblies.* By this propercie, wee may see a great number at this day euerie where come far

short in the true worship of God: for most men neuer regard the preaching of the word, but content themselves with morning & euening prayer: which they frequent to auoid the penaltie of the laws of the magistrat, and the shame of the world. But these are miserable worshippers of God, his worship ought to be free and willing.

The second propercie: The worship of God, must be expressed with seemely, meet, and conuenient gesture. The word translated *Worship*, signifieth *doing of reuerence*, with bowing of the bodie and knee: and therefore it is not an indifferent thing but necessarie, to vse conuenient gesture in Gods worship, that thereby the grace and humilitie of the heart may bee expressed. The (b) *Angels that stand before the throne of God, haue two wings to couer their feet, and two to couer their faces*: thereby testifying their reuerence to Gods Maiestie. In this point also many come short: for as the common complaint is, the manner of many is to lie shorting and sleeping vnder mens elbows at sermons, and in the time of prayer to sit vnreuerently with their heads couered. These things ought not to be: for God is Lord of body and soule, and ought to be worshipped with both.

The third propercie. All that wil truly worship God, must first bee humbled for their sinnes, and haue the pride of their hearts brought downe, and be stroken with a feare of Gods glorious Maiestie. So these Iewes *did prostrate their bodies at the feet of the congregation, when they came to worship God.* The Iaylor that imprisoned *Paul* and *Silas* ouer-night, and put their feet in the stockes, would then haue verie little regarded *Pauls* doctrine, being so cruel and rigorous to their persons: Yet when hee was about to haue killed himselfe with his sword, (supposing the prisoners had bene gone, because hee saw the doores open) hee was glad and ioyfull to heare the voyce of *Paul*, who called vnto him, that hee should doe himselfe no harme, for they were all there: then being humbled by that strange and wonderfull worke of God, he comes in vnto them, humbles himselfe, and falls downe before them, crauing them to tell him what hee must

(a) Psal. 14. 4

(b) Ilay 6. 2.

(c) Act. 16. 29

doe to bee saued. In like manner, so long as men haue not their proud hearts beaten downe, they will neuer worship God in spirit and truth. Would we therefore know why the most part worship God formally? Surely it is because they haue not bene humbled with a feare of Gods maiestic, and a terror of hell: Neither can it bee hoped, that wee shall euer worship God sincerely, till our hearts bee thus broken within vs, and wee touched with the feare of Gods iudgements. The want hercof is the cause, why men and women content themselves with a bare mumbling ouer of the words of the *Lords prayer*, the *Creed*, and *ten Commandments*, neuer seeking in the sinceritie of their hart, cheerfully, and willingly, both with soule and bodie, to do worship vnto God.

The second fruit of true conuersion concerneth man, and that is, *A reuerence of the true worshippers of God*, noted in these words, *Before thy face*. These Iewes when they were conuerted, did not think themselves worthy to bee members of this congregation, but submitted themselves to be foot-stooles vnto them. This reuerence shewes it selfe in this one thing which is the ground thereof; namely, a base opinion which euery true conuerted person hath of himselfe, by reason of his owne vnworthinesse: This was in *Paul*, causing him to call himselfe *the (a) chiefe of all sinners*. And the same ought to be in euery one of vs; for this is true grace, and a note of true repentance, when a man or woman can truly abase themselves beneath all Gods people; so as if the question were, who is the vilest person in the Church? the conscience of euery man should answer, *I my selfe*. The proud and pharasaicall heart, is farre from true conuersion; but the humble heart is pleasing to God.

And shall know that I haue loved thee: These words containe a reason of the former submisile behaviour of the Iewes, for it might bee asked, why shall these Iewes come to sojorne themselves with Gods people, and bee content to make themselves foot-stooles vnto them? The answer is, because *Christ will make them know, that hee hath loved his Church*.

Here marke and see the ground of all true reuerence, *Gods love and fauour*. Sundry persons both in Church and Common wealth, haue reuerence due ynto them, as Maisters from their seruants; parents from their children; and all superiours from their inferiours. Now if these men would attaine to true reuerence indeed, first they must seeke to be in the love and fauour of God, and of his children; and so shall they procure vnto themselves true reuerence: for when men set their hearts to feare God, then will God turne the hearts of men to reuerence them. This ought to bee thought vpon of those that bee great in birth and wealth; They must not stand on these things, but looke to the foundation of true reuerence; namely, the fauour of God, which they must seek for: and getting that, God will get them reuerence, euen of wicked men. The cause why many in high place, as Magistrates, Maisters, &c. want due reuerence, is for that they care not for the fauour of God, the ground thereof.

Verse 10. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, therefore will I deliuer thee from the houre of temptation, which will come vpon all the world, to trie them that dwell vpon the earth.*

These words containe the second promise of Christ vnto this church, concerning their preservation in time of most bloudie persecution: for this Epistle vnto this Church, as also this booke, was written by *Iohn*, after the ascension of Christ in the dayes of *Domitian* the Emperour of Rome; after whome succeeded *Traianus*, who when hee was seated in his Empire, rayfed vp grievous persecution against Gods Church in all places of his Dominion, wherein hee put to death innumerable thousands of Christians for the space of foureteene years. Of this persecution our Saviour Christ fore-tels this Church, calling it, *The houre of temptation*, and withall he promisseth to preserve this Church in the time of this bloudie persecution: adding a reason thereof, *Because they had*

(*) 1. Tim. 1.

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constantly and sincerely professed his Gospel.

In this promise of preservation, note sundry points: I. the occasion thereof, *The keeping of the word of his patience.* II. The thing promised, *deliverance under Tribulation.* III. A prediction of this persecution, *That it shall come unto the world, for ever, and to trie them.*

I. point. *The word of Christs patience* some expound to bee, Christs commandement of patience: but that expolition is too strait; here it signifieth the whole Doctrine of salvation by Christ; which is called the word of patience: firstly because it teacheth patience: Secondly, because it is the instrument of patience; for when a man knows salvation by Christ, and also beleeveth the same to belong to him, that will make him patient in all the miseries of this life. Thirdly, because it cannot bee professed and holden vnto death without patience, but as it is said of the good ground, *It bringeth forth fruit with patience:* so must euery one do that professeth this Gospel.

In this occasion of Gods promise observe, that Gods grace well vsed, is rewarded with increase. Those which haue receiued but small measure of grace at the first, by becoming faithfull therein, haue receiued increase, which serues to mooue vs to bee faithfull in the vse of those talents, which wee haue receiued: For hereby wee shall receive increase, when as those which hauing receiued good gifts from God, as knowledge, and such like, because they haue not beene faithfull in the vse thereof, haue beene deprived of the same. Wherefore who soeuer hath begun to know the will of God, to beleue, and to repent; let the same parties proceed to vse those gifts still to Gods glorie, and the good of his Church and people, among whom they liue; and they shall see the Lord will double and treble, and greatly increase the same vnto them.

Again note, the doctrine of the Gospel is a *Doctrine of patience.* This sheweth how good and meet it is for euery one to learne the gospel in the dayes of peace: for euery one in times of triall, would wish for strength and patience: and wee know not how long these dayes of peace will last. Again, each man in

his calling, is subiect to many crosses and miseries: for *the sweat of our face must wee drinke our bread.* And who is free from paines and diseases; yea who can scape death it selfe? Now in all these, and in all other troubles; wee haue need of patience. And therefore in the time of health and ease, let vs hide in our hearts the seedes of this grace, to wit, the Doctrine of the Gospel: and then in due time, wee shall reape the fruit of patience, which will make vs contented in all distresses both of life and death. And if wee would know why most men are so impatient in afflictions; it is because they haue so little knowledge and faith in the gospel of his grace.

Secondly, seeing the gospel is the word of patience; hereby all persons that looke to bee saued by the gospel, must learne to put on patience, keeping a moderation in all their thoughts, wils, and affections; for when wee be impatient any way, wee are not suitable to the Doctrine of our salvation.

Thirdly, this word of patience is called Christs (*The word of my patience*), because Christ is the author of it. This is added to beat downe the pride of this Church; for when God doth praise them for their obedience, their hearts might haue bene puffed vp with pride. But to prevent this euill in this Church, whom he now praised, he calleth it *his patience*, that they might not thinke this good thing was of themselves. And the same consideration must checke the proud thoughts that rise in our hearts; namely, to remember that no good thing wee haue is our owne, but Christs. What hast thou which thou hast not receiued? Why then shouldest thou boast? *I. Cor. 4. 7.*

II. point. The thing promised, is *preservation and deliverance in the bloody persecution under Traianus:* in which for the space of fourteene yeares innumerable Christians were put to death; *I will deliver thee from the house of temptation.*

Here first observe, that God hath appointed certaine set houres and times for the triall of his Church, as well for the gifts of his grace; as of their wickednesses and hypocrisie. Thus he led the Israelites (a) *fortie yeares in the wilderness* so (a) Deut. 8 2: *see whether they would obey him; and bee*

- (a) Deut. 13. 3 *sent (a) false Prophets among them, to trie whether they would turne from the true God or no.* And as God thus dealeth with his church; so he hath appointed particular times and hours, wherein he will trie particular persons (b) *God bid Abraham kill his sonne, and that was his tryall.* And (c) *Herakias* was left vnto himselfe, *That the Lord might see all that was in his hart.* And so for euery Christian, God hath a set time of triall, wherein he wil either make manifest his grace, or disclose their hypocrisie.

The Vse.

This point ought to be well weighed, for herein the Lord dealeth like the worthy founders of great Schooles: who haue appointed certaiue set times of posing, for the tryall of their Schollers, to see what euerie ones proceeding is, that they may be accordingly rewarded. And as it is a shame for one to haue bene long in a good Schoole, and to haue made no proceedings in learning: so it is for any one, that hath liued long in the Schoole of Christ, and hath not profited in grace. This therefore must teach vs these duties: First, to trie our selues, & that straitly concerning our progresse in knowledge, faith, repentance, and obedience; for God himselfe will trie vs, whose eyes we can neuer blind, though wee may deceiue men: He wil lay open our harts, and make knowne what is in vs, whether it bee true grace, or false hypocrisie. Let vs not couer our selues with figge leaues, for God will strip vs naked; but rather let vs search our selues, touching our sins, and Gods graces: and neuer rest contented, till wee haue found in our soules the good gifts of grace, which will abide his tryall.

Secondly, hereby we are admonished, as neere as we can to conforme our harts and liues, vnto the word and wil of God; for hee will trie vs. Wonderfull it is to see how common the reproach of pre-fizennesse is, and if it were not well knowne that the world is full of Atheists, that might discourage many a Christian. But the remembrance of this tryall, wherein hypocrisie will vanish as the stubble before the fire, must mooue vs to labour for sinceritie. When wee haue done our best, wee shall bee farre short of that wee ought to bee. And therefore through the reproach of the

world, let vs hold on our good endeavour, and labour to haue the maine graces of true faith, and a good conscience, with a resolute purpose not to sinne: that so wee may stand in the day of triall. But if wee want these, and liue loosely, wee shall bee found like the foolish Virgins, that haue onely the blasing lamps of an outward profession, and want the sauing oyle of grace, which may make vs acceptable vnto God at his appearing. Wee haue bene trained vp in the Schoole of Christ; what a shame will it bee, if when Christ comes to prooue vs, wee bee then found barren and voyd of sound grace! *Dauid* be hinking himselfe of this triall of the Lord, doth conforme himselfe vnto the wil of God: and therefore offereth himselfe vnto his tryal, saying, (d) *Lord proue me:* meaning in regard of the truth and sinceritie of a good conscience, not of the perfectnesse of his owne wayes. And hereunto must we in deuor, not suffering any sinne to raigne in vs.

Qu. But how was this promise verified touching their deliuerance from persecution, seeing no church was free from it? For euen the Churches of Asia, whereof this in Philadelphia was a principall one, were persecuted by *Tristramus.* *Answer.* This and such like promises of deliuerance to Gods children from tryals and afflictions, must bee vnderstood not simply; but with condition: to wit, so farre forth as they may bee hurtfull vnto them, and in the least measure hinder their saluation; and indeed they are promises of deliuerance from the euill of temptation and persecution; not from persecution and temptation it selfe. *Psal. 91. 10.* The Lord promileth to him that trusteth in God, *The plague shall not come neere his dwelling:* and yet by experience wee know that Gods children in generall plagues, are taken away as well as others; and therefore that promise must bee vnderstood of deliuerance, not from the plague it selfe, but from the hurt thereof; so as it shall not hinder the good or saluation of any in the godly mans house. We pray *Lead vs not into temptation;* which wee must not vnderstand of freedome from all temptation; for it is the will of God wee should be tried: but therein wee are taught

(d) *Psa. 26. 2.*

taught to pray, that God would not forsake vs in our temptations, or giue vs vp wholly to the power of the diuell; but that it may tend to our profit, and not to our hurt, as well in respect of grace, as of saluation. And so far forth was this promise accomplished to this Church.

The Vjs.

The due consideration wherof, is most comfortable to Gods church & people; teaching them not to fear the crosse in any temptation. God will haue his church tryed, but the faithfull therein need not to be dismayed: for God by his promise hath taken away the euill and poyson of all tryals and temptations, to them that haue care to keepe faith and a good conscience, though they suffer a thousand crosses in this world neuer so long; yea, though they die vnder the crosse: which may put comfort into the hart of any distressed soule whatsoeuer, & reuiue those that are oppressed with temptations.

Againe, in that this promise is not made simply and absolutely, but with restraint; hereby we are taught, that the petitions of those persons which pray simply and absolutely to be freed from all temptations and aduersities, are not according to Gods will and word: For euery petition must depend vpon some promise of God; but wee haue no absolute promise of freedome from all tryals and temptations; but onely so farre forth as they be euill. And therefore in praying against temptations, we must qualifie our petitions for temporall deliuerance, according to the tenour of the promises of Christ: that is, so farre forth as may most aduance Gods glorie, and best further our saluation.

Quest. How can this great persecution be called but an *houre of temptation*, seeing it lasted fourteene yerres?

Ans. In diuers respects it may be so called: First, in regard of God (a) *with whom a thousand yerres are but as one day*: and therefore 14. yerres with God are but as one holre. Secondly, in regard of that punishment which euery man by his sinnes deserueth in hell eternally. Thirdly, in the affection of Gods people which were tried. When *Iacob* serued *Laban* seven yerres for *Rahel*, his affection made him thinke (b) *it was but a short time*: So when Gods children suffer for the name and Gospell of Christ, the consideration thereof wil

make them thinke long afflictions to be but short. This affection caused *Paul* to wish to himselfe eternall perdition for the glorie of God, in the saluation of the Iewes, *Rom. 9. 3.*

The end of this phraze touching the shortnesse of time; was to comfort this and all other churches in the time of this grievous persecution: for the consideration of the shortnesse of the time, is a meanes to ease any affliction; & to arme an impatient man with some measure of contentation.

III. point. The prophesie or prediction of this affliction, is in these words: *Which will come on all the world, so try them that dwell vpon the earth.* Here Christ foretelleth a thing which was to come, simply by himselfe, and from himselfe: not by the helpe of any cause, or any man or angell. And hereby he proues himselfe to bee true God: for it is a propertie and priuiledge of the true God, of himselfe and by himselfe, to foretell a thing to come, before it can bee seene either in it selfe, or in the causes thereof: no man, nor angell, can so absolutely foretell that which is to come: but in their predictions they first see the things present in their causes, vnlesse they be reuealed vnto them from God. But some may here demand, Whether Christs foreknowledge and prediction, were the cause of this grievous persecution. *Ans.* Not so, for things come not to passe because of Gods foreknowledge thereof, but because they would come to passe, therefore God foreseeeth & foretelleth them: there is a higher cause of all things, than prescience and prediction, to wit, the good will and pleasure, and decree of God. So Christ is said (c) *to bee deliuered to bee crucified, by the determinat will and counsell of God*: and from the same eternall counsell did this persecution vnder *Traian* originally proceed: for the first cause of the euent of euery thing is Gods decree, either ordaining or disposing the same. It wil be said, If this be so, then is God the author of sinne. *Ans.* God forbid: For the manner of Gods will and decree is diuers: some things hee decreeth to cause and effect of himselfe, and by himselfe, as all good things: some other things God decreeth to be effected by others, as sinne. And so euill things though they bee not

(c) *Ad. 1. 1.*

(a) *2. Pet. 3. 8.*

(b) *Gen. 29. 20.*

N.B. according to his reuealed will, yet they come in some sort from his will and decree: for if he simply nilled them, they could neuer be. Beside, in Gods decree are set downe, not only the things to bee done, but also the means & circumstances thereof; as wee may see in this persecution, the place and end are plainly noted. This we must remember, & on the contrary take heed of the opinion of some Protestants, which hold and teach, that sundry things come to passe, God onely foreseeing them, & no way decreeing or willing them: as namely sin. But to giue vnto God a bare fore-knowledge without a decree, is to put vpon him an idle providence, which the nature of God will not admit.

N.B.

The end why Christ alleadgeth this Prophecie, is to expound his former saying: For it might bee asked, Why doth Christ call this persecution, *the hour of temptation*? Christ answereth, because it wil certainly come, to try them that dwell on earth. Where wee may note, what is the property of afflictions and persecutions, be they publike or priuat; Namely, they serue to discouer the state of mens hearts; either by making manifest their faith, repentance, and feare of God: or by detecting their impatience & hypocrisie.

Verse 11. Behold, I come shortly: hold that which thou hast, that no man take thy crowne.

Here is Christs commandement to this church; wherein consider first what hee inioyneth them: then the reason thereof. The thing he inioyneth is this, *Hold fast that which thou hast*; that is, hold as it were with both hands, that little measure of faith and grace which thou hast receiued from me, & in no wise part with the same. This commandement hath bene before expounded, Chap. 2. vers. 25.

The reasons to enforce this commandement are two: One going before it in these words; *I come shortly*: That is, either in the generall iudgement, or by death vnto thee particularly. Before this reason is put a note of attention, *Behold*; to giue vs to vnderstand, that the speedy coming of Christ vnto vs, either by death in particular, or in iudgement generall, is a matter of great moment neuer to bee

forgotten, but laid vp & treasured euen in the bottome of our hearts. Herein we must not flatter our selues, and say with the bad seruant, Mat. 24. 48. *My Maister hath foretold his coming*: for that is the cause of so much wickednesse and impenitencie as is in the world: But rather with an antient (a) Father, thinke we euer

(a) Irenaeus.

This dayly persuation of the speedy coming of Christ, is of notable vse. For first, it will daunt the most desperat wretch that is, and make him to tremble in himselfe, and restraine him from many sinnes. And if a man belong to God, & be yet a loose luer, this persuation will rowze him out of his sins, and make him turne vnto God, by vsing the means of repentance: for who would not seeke to saue his soule, if hee were perswaded that Christ were now coming to giue him his final reward? Secondly, if a man haue grace and haue repented, and do beleeue, this persuation is a notable meanes to make him constant in euery good dutie, both of pietie to God, and of charitie towards his brethren. Thirdly, this serueth to comfort any person that is in affliction: for when he shall beleeue this which Christ hath said, *I come shortly*: he cannot but thinke but his deliuerance is at hand; for at his coming, he bringeth perfect redemption to all his Elect.

The second reason is set after the commandement; *that no man take thy crowne*: that is, *the crowne of thy glory, euen euermore*. This must not be restrayned to the minister of this Church, taking it onely for the crowne of his ministry, though it bee also vnderstood of him; but the same must bee referred to the whole Church: as if our Saviour Christ should say; If thou hold not fast thy faith and other graces, thou wilt loose the crowne of glorie that is ordained for thee.

Hence some gather, that a man ordained to life may finally perish, because another may haue that crowne which was ordained for him. But this is a flat abuse of this and such like texts of Scriptures: for the words are not *absolute*, that a man may loose his crowne, but *conditionall*: *Hold fast, or els thou shalt perish, and lose euermore life, though it bee ordained for thee*. Now the vse of such speeches, is not to signifie falling from grace, but to shew

vnto

vnto vs our owne weaknes in our selues; that we might acknowledge, that if wee were left of God wholly to our selues, we could not but perishe. Therefore they serue to stir vp the child of God to humble himselfe in the acknowledgement of his owne weakenesse, vnto a carefull v-
N.B. sing of the meanes to come to saluation. Like as a father that takes his child and sets him on a horse, guiding the horse with one hand, and holding him with the other; and then saith vnto the child, *take heed lest thou fall*: Not meaning thereby that the child shall fall, but intending to make him sit faster; and let him know that if he should leaue him he would fall.

Secondly, Christ vseth such speeches, that therby he may make his church perseuer in grace vnto the end: for al exhortations and threatnings in Gods word, are instruments of perseuerance in grace vnto Gods children: because as God hath appointed who shall bee saued certainly, so he hath ordained certain means to bring the same to passe: part whereof are exhortations and threatnings, which do not import any finall relaps, but serue as means & causes of perseuerance: and for this end, doth Christ here bid this church, *hold fast, lest another take her crown.*

N.B. In this threatning wee may note, that when God withdrawes his grace from one man, or his blessing from any one people for the abuse thereof, hee hath others readie to bestow the same vpon, who will vse the same well: when *Indas* was cut off from the Apostleship, *Matthias* was chosen in his roome: and when the Iewes by infidelitie fell away from God, he had the Gentiles in store to ingrasse in their stead; for the arme of God is not shortned. When any one people shall abuse his Gospel, he can giue it to another that will bring forth the fruit thereof, *Mat. 21. 43.*

The Vse.

This must bee thought vpon, for by Gods mercie we are now Gods people, and do inioy his Gospel; but wee must not flatter our selues herewith, for if we abuse the same, wee must know that hee hath another Nation in store, whom wee now contemne, whither hee can send his Gospel, & cause them to bring forth the plentifull fruits thereof. Wee therefore must embrace and hold fast this blessing of God which now wee enioy, and shew

foorth the power of obedience, or else God will take it from vs. And wee know not how neere this iudgement is; seeing other particular iudgements haue not brought vs to repent. And what else meane the rumors of wars? are they not Gods warnings, bidding vs hold fast his Gospel, or els it will bee taken from vs? Although therefore wee loose all other things; as honour, riches, lands, or life it selfe; yet let vs hold fast our crowne: When the Arke of God is gone, no glory is left, *1. Sam. 4. 21.*

Verse 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God; & he shall go no more out: and I will write vpon him the name of my God, and the name of the Citie of my God, which is, the new Ierusalem, which commeth down out of heauen from my God, and I will write vpon him my new name.*

Verf. 13. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith vnto the Churches.*

These words are the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts. First a promise in the twelfth verse. Secondly, a commandement in the 13. For the promise: In it we are to obserue two points; The partie to whom it is made; and the thing promised. The partie is, *hee that overcometh*, of whom wee haue spoken before: for this promise hath beene propounded sixe times, for substance the same, though in other tearmes. Yet here the verie word *Overcometh*, doth giue vs to vnderstand, that he that would haue his seruice pleasing to God, must dispose himselfe to a battell or combate, (for ouercomming presupposeth a fight.) The enemies which hee is to fight against are spirituall: to wit, his owne corrupt nature, the wicked world, and the diuel: and in this spirituall combat a man must be a good souldier, before he can bee a good Christian: for all these enemies wil seeke to draw him backe and hinder him, so soone as hee shall any way endeavour to please God. Indeed God could haue freed his seruants from all temptations, but hee will not; it is Gods pleasure by temptations to haue his seruants tried. Whereby it is manifest that they are deceived, that imagine the state of a Christian to be a freedome from all miseries and temp-

temptations, or a state of ease wherein is no strife or trouble to disquiet the mind : nay it is a Souldiers condition, in which hee that would ouercome, must wage a perpetuall battell against all his enemies; both within him and without him, and that vnto death.

The thing promised. *W^{ill} I make a pillar in the house of my God, and hee shall goe no more out.* Here Christ doth most notably expresse the state and condition of eternal life; In the description whereof hee doth allude to the custome and practise of men, who minding to preferue the memorie of their names after their death,

used to erect durable pillars of wood, or stone, in some towne, valley, or mountaine, with their name engrauen or written thereon. This practise is common in humane hystories: and (a) *Abolon* wanting issue, *set vp a pillar with his owne name upon it, in the Kings dale, thereby to continue his remembrance with posteritie.* The meaning then is: as if Christ had said, Others for the continuing of their memory after their death, do in some special place erect some durable pillar of wood or stone, with their owne names written or engrauen thereon: But to him that *ouercometh*, I will not set vp such a pillar, but euen make him a pillar durable and everlasting, whose memorie shall alwayes continue.

He addeth further, he shall be a pillar *in the Temple of my God*: as if hee should say, Others set vp their pillars in valleyes and mountaines, or such places where some notable exploit hath bin wrought; but the place which I will choose (saith Christ) is the temple of my God: that is, the Church tryumphant, which was figured by the Temple in Ierusalem, and by the Tabernacle; as we may see, *Heb. 9.9.* and *Reuel. 21. 3.* for those were two places where Gods people worshipped him: & where God testified his presence in a speciall maner vnto his people. And so in the true Temple, the kingdome of heauen, Gods saints and angels do worship him immediatly; where God is present with them in most glorious & comfortable manner. This then is Christs meaning: he shal not onely bee a part of that Temple, but an excellent part, euen a pillar in the tryumphant church in heauen. And to shew what is meant by this

temple, Christ calleth it *the temple of his God*; thereby noting the highest heauen. Where obserue, that god is called Christs God, which argueth inferioritie, & therefore it must be vnderstood of Christ, as he is man, & as he is mediator: in which respect he receiueth from his father al his offices, and power to execute the same. But as Christ is God, he is equall with his Father, and receiueth nothing from him.

And to instruct vs yet further herein, (Christ saith) *Hee shall goe no more out.* When men erected pillars for their memoriall, in procelle of time they would weare away; and therefore they caused them to be renewed, or els their remembrance thereby would not continue: but he that is once made a member of the tryumphant church, shall there remaine for euer and euer: and no time shall euer come, wherein he shall cease to be a pillar in the same.

Further, in the pillars erected by men, their names were written or engrauen: And to this practise Christ alludeth, saying, That hee that is made a pillar in the tryumphant Church, shall haue names written on him; these names are three: 1. *The name of my God*: that is, I will make it manifest, that this man is indeed the sonne of God, and that God is all in all vnto him. The second name is; *The Name of the Citie of my God*: By Citie, hee meaneth not the tryumphant Church; but the place where the tryumphant Church shall be; to wit, the highest heauen: as it is taken *Reuel. 21. 10.* So that hereby Christ would teach vs thus much, that hee which ouercometh, shall bee knowne to bee a citizen of heauen; and that the priuiledges of that kingdom be long vnto him.

And lest any should doubt, what is meant by the. citie of God, Christ here described it: first, by the resemblance thereof, calling it *Ierusalem*: because that citie, in regard of the Temple especially, was a figure of the kingdome of heauen. Secondly, he calleth it, *the new Ierusalem*: that is, the place of the tryumphant Church, euen the highest heauen: which is not called new in respect of being, for it was from the beginning; but in respect of the manner of reuealing and manifesting it: for in the old Testament the New Ierusalem was reuealed to the

Iewes onely, and that obscurely: but vnder the kingdome of Christ, it is more fully reuealed not only to the Iewes, but to all the world. Thirdly, he addeth that it doth now descend out of heauen from his God. Therein answering to an objection; for it might bee said, this temple of God in heauen is so farre off, that wee cannot ascend or attaine vnto it, how then shall we come thither? Christ answereth, that this new Ierusalem cometh downe from God out of heauen. *Quest.* How (will some say) can heauen come out of heauen? *Ans.* As Paul saith of Christ, that hee was crucified among the Galatians before their eyes, because his crucifying was so lively represented vnto them in the ministerie of the Gospell: So here, heauen may be said to come down from God out of heauen, in regard of the preaching of the gospell, which doth most visibly represent and set open heauen vnto vs, that Gods people may enter therein: by the faithfull embracing whereof, we become citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, Eph. 2. 19.

The third name which shall bee written on him, is *Christ's new name*: whereby is not meant any title of Christ, as *Iesus*, *Mediator*, &c. but the dignitie, power, and glorie of Christ. *Quest.* How can that bee called new, seeing hee had power and glorie from all eternitie? *Answer.* It is called new, because it is receiued of Christ, as hee is Mediatour, God incarnat; beeing that which was giuen to him after his death and passion; standing in his rising againe, in his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of his Father. Hereof Paul saith, Phil. 2. 9. *God gave him a name above euery name*; that is, dignitie, power, and glorie: as it is expounded, Heb. 2. 7. And this glorie, power, and dignitie, will Christ giue to them that overcome. And thus we haue eternall life set out vnto vs by the author of life himselfe. The summe whereof is this; That hee which overcome shall bee made a true member of the tryumphant Church, and there continue for euer: and shall haue three Names written on him: *The name of God*, hauing this made euident, that hee is the childe of God: *The name of Gods Citie*: being made partaker of the

priuelidges of Gods kingdome of heauen: *The new name of Christ*, communicating with Christ in his glorie and maiestie.

And Christ doth thus describe life eternall vnto vs for speciall causes; which may be these. I. To comfort them which haue care to keepe faith and a good conscience; and to encourage them against all hinderances and miseries of this life; for what can more harden a man in good duties, than to set before him his recompence and reward? Whereby we learne that in all miseries and troubles that may befall vs for the maintenance of true religion and good conscience, wee must comfort our selues and not faint. And to encourage vs herein, we are carefully to propound and set before vs the due consideration of life eternall; for this it was that caused (a) *Moses to despise worldly honour, and to choose affliction with the people of God.* We must also looke vnto Christ (b) *Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, and despised shame.* Souldiours that are vncertaine of any reward, are yet content vnder their Generall to adventure their liues at his command: how much more then ought Christian Souldiours to fight manfully, and stand fast in all troubles for Christ sake, who hath set before them such a great reward?

Secondly, it is thus described, to bring Gods people to a view and tast of life eternall, that thereby they may the more affect it. Many cast off all care of religion and good conscience, for the present delights of earthly things: they can see no goodnesse nor pleasure in spiritual things: The sweetnesse of earthly pleasures puts mens mouthes out of tast, in regard of any relish of life eternall: but this must not be so with vs; we must bee of *Moses* mind, who desired to see the land of Canaan when hee was not permitted to enter into it; and thereupon God tooke him vp into Mount Nebo, and shewed it vnto him: So, considering Christ hath thus largely described this kingdome vnto vs, wee must labour to comprehend in our vnderstandings, and in our hearts to possesse by faith, something of life eternall, though wee cannot as yet fully inherit the ioyes and pleasures thereof.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, it is thus described, to teach vs to practise *Pauls rule*, 1. *Tim.* 6. 12. Namely, *to passe through all the miseries and troubles of this world, and to take hold of eternall life.* This is a most necessarie dutie, but yet little practised: men with both hands lay hold vpon the things of this world, vpon riches & pleasures; but who considereth what is prepared by Christ in heauen for them that ouercome? and who laboureth to lay hold thereon? and to keepe that sure, though hee loose all things els.

Lastly, this description of eternall life, here serueth to make the people of God to feare no death; though it were most cruell and terrible; for death is but a tran doore, whereby the child of God must passe to all glorie and happinesse, when hee shall bee made a pillar in Gods temple. Thus much generally of the thing promised: Now follow in particular the parts thereof.

First, whereas Christ promiseth to make them that ouercome, pillars and chiefe members in the church triumphant: Hereby wee are taught to labour to become true members of gods church in this life. For life eternall must begin here, and they that would be pillars in his church triumphant; must now become members of his church militant: for not onely ministers and teachers are pillars in Gods church, though they be chiefe pillars therein; but every one yong and old, man and woman, that is a true beleuer. And thus shalt thou become a pillar in Gods Church on earth, by maintaining and vpholding the Gospell of Christ; which thou must do, partly by teaching to those, whom thou art bound to teach within the compasse of thy calling: and partly by good example of life and conuersation; and chiefly by a true and bold profession thereof, not onely in time of peace, but even in the greatest tryals and afflictions.

Secondly, hee addeth; Hee will make him a pillar in the Temple of God; that is, in the church triumphant; for in the new Testament wee haue no other Temples, but Gods Church triumphant and militant. Hereby then we must learne to renounce that ignorant opinion of the world, who iudge every materiall church to be the Temple of God, and as holy as

the church in Ierusalem was. But the distinction of place and place in regard of holinesse which was vnder the law, is taken away by Christ. The house is now as holy as the church; churches indeed must be regarded and maintained, not for holinesse; but for order sake: now men may every where offer the calues of their lips, and lift vp pure hands from a pure heart vnto God.

Thirdly, *I will write vpon him the name of my God*; that is, whereas God the father is my God first, I will also communicate vnto him the same name of God; and he shall haue God even my God, to bee his God also. By this it is plaine, that no man can haue fellowship with God but by Christ: wee must not looke to haue immediat fellowship with God of our selues, or by any other, but by Christ: God heares not, God helps not, God saues not, but by Christ; nay, God is no God vnto vs out of Christ. For first, he is a God vnto Christ, and then in him and by him vnto vs. Therefore if wee would call vpon God, wee must call on him through Christ; if wee would giue him thanks, it must be in and by Christ; for in him onely are wee heard. If wee would know God, it must bee by Christ, for hee is the very engrauen image of his father, in whom is manifested the wisdom, iustice, and mercy of God, in him dwelleth the fulnesse of the Godhead; and to conceiue of God out of Christ, is to make God an idoll in the braine. Lastly, if wee would receive any temporall blessing from God, it must bee in and by Christ; as meat, drinke, and clothing. For if wee receive them from God out of Christ, wee are but vlturers of them, and the vse thereof shall turne to our further condemnation.

Fourthly, he saith; *I will write on him the name of the citie of my God*. that is, hee shall haue the priuiledges of the kingdom of heauen. We do al desire, and looke for the inheritance of Gods kingdom after this life: therefore here wee must liue as citizens of Gods kingdom; conforming ourselues to Gods commandement; abandoning al sin, and so living in faith & a good conscience vnto the end, that after this life wee may assuredly persuaade our selues, we shall be made partakers of the priuiledges of this kingdom.

Fifthly,

N.B.

N.B.

Fifely it is said: this Citie of God, is the new Ierusalem, which commeth downe out of heauen from God; that is, by the preaching of the Gospell. Hereby wee are taught more carefully to seeke to attaine to the kingdom of God, for behold gods endlesse mercie herein: our sins shut heauen gates against vs, but by the blood of Christ he hath opened them; and by the Ministerie of the Gospell, he makes heauen come downe vnto men: God therefore would not see vs damned; hee hath made open a way, euen a new & liuing way whereby we may come to heauen and escape hell. God hath brought downe heauen among men; wee must therefore with the people in Iohn Baptists time, violently enter into this kingdom, and strive to take it by force. Matt. 11: 12.

Lastly he saith; I wil write my new name on him: that is, I will make him partaker of that glorie and dignitie wherewith I my selfe am glorified since my death and resurrection. Marke this: all that after this life must haue Christs new name, must in this life become new creatures; So Paul saith, (d) *If any man bee in Christ, he is a new creature.* And againe, (e) *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing; but a new creation.* Would wee then partake with Christ in his glorie? we must here bee partakers of his grace: herein standeth true Religion to become new creatures, and not in bare knowledge and profession. *We must therefore put off (f) the old man which is corrupt with sin, and bee renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* But if we content our selues with the image of the old man wherein wee were borne, wee shall neuer partake of Christs glorie; for this new name must be given to the new creature, the old man and it cannot agree together.

Vers. 13. *Let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith vnto the Church.*

This conclusion hath bene handled in the former Epistles.

Vers. 14. *And vnto the Angell of the Church of the Laodicians write: These things saith Amen, that faithfull and*

true witnesse, that beginning of the creatures of God.

Here followeth the seventh and last Epistle to the Church of the Laodicians: whereto is prefixed a commandement vnto Iohn, whereby hee is authorized to pen the same, in these words: *And vnto the Angell of the Church of the Laodicians write,* which hath bene handled before.

The Epistle it selfe hath three parts, a Preface; the substance or matter of the Epistle; and the conclusion. The Preface is this 14. verse, wherein is set downe, in whose name this Epistle is written; to wit, Christs: who is here described by two arguments: I. Hee is called, *Amen, which is that faithfull and true witnesse.* II. *He is the beginning of the creatures of God.*

For the first (*Amen*) is an Hebrew Aduerbe of asseueration, signifying as much as *verily, truly, or certainly.* This title is giuen to Christ, & the reason thereof is expressed in the words following, which are a full exposition of the same. *Amen, is that faithfull and true witnesse:* So that Christ is called *Amen*, to testifie that hee is a *witnesse, a faithfull witnesse, and a true witnesse;* which title was giuen to Christ in the fifth verse of the first Chapter: where it was expounded; and reasons rendred why he is so called. Vnto which title is here added, that hee is *a true witnesse;* because hee speaks the truth, according as every thing is in it selfe, without error, deceit, or falshood; for that which he receiveth from his Father, is the will of his Father, which is the Rule of all truth.

That we may come to the right vse of this Argument; we must first search out the ends, for which Christ is here called *Amen*, that is a faithfull and true witnesse, which by the contents of the Epistle, we may easily gesse to be these. First, to set forth himselfe vnto the Angell of this Church, an example, and patern of fidelity in his Ministerie: in the duties whereof, hee had bene slacke and negligent: Christ therefore by his owne example, would teach him without respect of persons, to instruct the Church of God truly, and faithfully. How this duetie is to bee performed, hath bene shewed before, Chap. 1: 5. And not onely to the Angell of this Church of Laodicea, but also to all the Church, and to all them that

(d) 2. Cor. 5.
17.

(e) Gal. 6. 15.

(f) Eph. 4. 22.
24.

that professe themselves to be his members, doth Christ propound himselfe an example of two most worthy vertues: Faith and Truth. For the first: *Faith* is a vertue, whereby a man makes good all his lawfull words, promises, oaths, leagues, compacts, and bargaines whatsoeuer, so as his word is as sure as an obligation, as we use to speake. *Truth* is another vertue, whereby a man without fraud, lye, or deceit, speaketh the truth from his heart, that is necessarie to be knowne for his owne good, the glorie of God, and the good of others.

Wee therefore must set before our eyes this president of our Saviour Christ: As he is a *witness*, yea a *faithfull and true witness*, without any faining or falshood, so let vs labour to shew our selues faithfull in all lawfull promises, and true in all our speeches: that so by these vertues, we may be knowne to be like vnto Christ, through our whole liues and conuersations. Secondly, Christ is here called *Amen*, to induce this Church of Laodicia, to apply effectually vnto her selfe the word of God, whether threatnings or promises; This Church had bene negligent in the duties of Religion, which came for want of applying Gods word vnto themselves. The right manner of applying gods word is this: In Gods word we are to consider the Law, and the Gospel. In the law, there are Commandements and threatnings: now a man must apply to his own person and life Gods Commandements particularly; that thereby hee may come to know his particular sinnes: then hee must also apply the threatnings of God vnto himselfe, that thereby hee may be humbled through the sight of his misery, & so made fit & capable of Gods grace. Thus the prodigall soone applied the law vnto himselfe, when he said, (a) *I have sinned against heaven and against thee; and am now more worthy to be called thy Sonne.* So did (b) *Daniell*, and (c) *Ezrah*, by applying the law vnto themselves, humble themselves, and their people: for this is the way to humble any man, & to make him fit to receiue grace: for the law is our schoolmaster to bring vs to Christ. Gal. 3.24. and the want of this speciall application of the law, was a cause of the dulnesse of the Laodicians, and is also of our slacknesse in Religion at this day.

Secondly, the Gospel also must be applied, not only by hearkning it to be true, as the Papists teach: but also by applying vnto our selues particularly the promises of righteousness and life everlasting by Christ. According as Paul saith, (d) *I desire to win Christ, & to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.* Ver. 15. Let vs (saith he) as many as be perfect be thus minded, teaching every one this speciall dutie of particular application. For as saint John saith, be thus by faith doth not apply the promises of the Gospel particularly to himselfe (e) *make Godsayer.* And this want of this application is the cause of negligence in Religion, and of so many luke-warme Gospellers as be at this day. For it is not sufficient to know the Gospel to be true, or to be able to teach it vnto others, vnlesse we can thus apply it to our selues. This then serues to prooue that iustifying faith must not onely be a bare assent to the truth of the Gospel, but a speciall faith which doth apply particularly vnto a man, those promises which are propounded concerning righteousness, and life euertlasting by Christ.

The second argument and title whereby Christ is described is this; *that hee is the beginning of the creatures of God.* The meaning wherof is, that Christ is he that is the Creator of all Gods creatures that were created: so it is said (f) *By him all things were created in heauen and in earth:* and though this be true, yet I doubt not but that Christ is here called *the beginning of the creatures of God*, for a further respect; namely, because he is the beginning of the new creature in regeneration: so it is said, (g) *We are the workmanship of God, created in Christ vnto good works.* So that euery regenerate person is a new creature; to which purpose it is said of Christ (h) *When he shall giue his soule an offering for sin, he shall feele his said, &c.* Because Christ is the roote and seed of all that are borne againe. How is Christ (will some say) the beginning of a new creature? Answer. Two waies. 1. As hee is the author of regeneration; for hee is the cause whereby a man is regenerate, in which respect hee is called *the father of the church*, E. say. 9. 6. And againe he saith: *Behold, (i) I and the children whom thou*

(a) Luk. 15. 21

(b) Dan. 9.

(c) Ezra. 9.

(d) Phil. 3. 8.

(e) 1. To. 5. 10

(f) Col. 1. 16.

(g) Eph. 2. 10.

(h) Heb. 10. 10

(i) E. say. 9. 6.

hath given mee. Secondly, because hee is the matter and root, out of which a new creature doth spring: and so the Church is called (a) *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*: alluding vnto *Adam* and *Eue*, who were a type of *Christ* and his church. For as *Eue* was taken out of *Adams* side, so the Church and euerie member thereof sprang of the blood that issued out of *Christs* side, which was of infinit merit, beeing the blood of him that was God.

The end why *Christ* in this Epistle is called the beginning of Gods creatures (as wee see by the contents thereof) is to meet with this common vice of this church; that they had more care to seeme to bee religious, than to bee religious indeed: now *Christ* would by this his title giue them to vnderstand, that their chiefest care must bee, to become new creatures indeed. And no doubt this is the fault of our dayes; our care is lesse for the power of godlinesse, than for the name thereof; we more respect shew than substance, and shadow, than truth it selfe. Which ought not to bee, for if we would bee in *Christ*, we must become new creatures. To exercise our selues in the word and Sacraments, and Prayers are good in their kind; but without this new creation, they are not sufficient to saluation.

Secondly, hereby he would meet with this speciall pride of theirs, whereby they did boast themselues, *to bee rich and to want nothing*. But *Christ* tels them, that there was no dignitie in any thing out of this, whereby in *Christ* they are made new creatures. Wherefore we must learne by them, not to bee puffed vp with outward priuiledges of nobilitie, wealth, strength, or such like, as many doe: but hee that would reioyce, must reioyce in this, That hee is a new creature in *Christ Iesus*.

Further, by calling himselfe *the beginning of the creatures of God*, *Christ* would teach them and vs, that hee doth loue his church, and preserue the same. *Eue* was created by the hand of God, not apart from *Adam*, but of his ribbes; for this end, that hee might loue and protect her, and that she might reuerence and serue him: Euen so euerie new creature springeth out of *Christs* heart blood, which God

hath so wrought, that wee might know how *Christ* hath loued vs, and that wee ought to magnifie and honour him: *Adam* was not the author, but the matter onely, whereof *Eue* was made: but *Christ* is both the author, and the matter of our regeneration: wherein appeareth his exceeding loue vnto vs. And looke as the root spends it selfe for the preservation of the braunches: so did *Christ* spend his owne blood for the saluation of his church.

Fourthly, whereas hee is called, *The beginning of his regeneration*; hence wee may gather, that the doctrine of the church of Rome is erroneous, which teach, that a man in his first conuersion, hath vse of his naturall free will, and can dispose himselfe in the act of his regeneration. But the creature of God cannot dispose himselfe in his creation; now euerie man that is regenerat, is the new creature of God, and therefore hath no power to dispose himselfe in his new creation.

Verse 15. *I know thy works: thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wast cold or hot.*

Verse 16. *Therefore because thou art luke-warme, and neither cold nor hot: it will come to passe, that I shall spew thee out of my mouth.*

In these words, and so forward to the 21. verse, is contained the substance or matter of this Epistle; and it hath two parts: A dispraise, vers. 15. 16. 17. And Counsell, vers. 18. 19. 20. They are dispraised for two vices: first, luke-warmnesse, verse 15. 16. Secondly, for their pride, verse 17.

I know thy works. This is a generall reproofe, signifying thus much: *All thy works are knowne vnto mee, and I viterly dislike them.* Then followeth the reason of this dislike, *Thou art neither cold nor hot*: which is a comparison borrowed from waters, whereof there be three sorts: hot, cold, and luke-warme. Now hot and cold waters doe not so much annoy the stomacke, as luke-warme water doth: they are sometimes comfortable to the stomacke, but luke-warme water doth disquiet it, till it bee cast vp, and so these three kindes of waters, hee compareth

three sorts of men. By *cold water*, hee vnderstanding such as are enemies to Religion: as at this day are the Iewes and Turkes, and other barbarous people. By *hot water*, he vnderstandeth men that are earnest and zealous of the truth. So that when he saith of this church, *Thou art neither cold nor hot*, his meaning is; thou art neither an open enemy, nor truly zealous of my Gospell.

I would thou werest cold or hot: Christ wisheth not simply, that they were enemies vnto him; but onely in respect of that estate of *lukewarmnes*, in which they were, as if hee should say: I had rather thou werest either cold or hot, than thus lukewarme as thou art. For if we should vnderstand it simply, wee should make Christ to desire that men should bee his enemies. By *lukewarme men*, hee vnderstandeth a people, who are in shew Gods Church, but in truth want the power of godlinesse, and the zeale of the spirit. *Because thou art such* (saith Christ to this Church) *therefore I will spew thee out of my mouth*: that is, looke as he that hath drunk lukewarme water, cannot abide it on his stomack, but must needs spew it vp againe; so am I wearie of this thy securitie, I cannot abide it, and therefore will I cast thee off from all fellowship with me, and make of thee which art a church in shew, to be no church.

Thus we see their fault, namely, lukewarmenesse; the greatnesse whereof, hee aggravates: first, by comparing it with the extreames, cold and hot, both which he preferreth before it, as may appear by his wish and desire: And secondly, by the punishment thereof; namely, vter reiection.

The Vse.

Hereby wee must examine our selues, whether this fault may not iustly bee charged vpon vs: after due triall, it will appeare, that we are guiltie of this sinne. The which that it may the better appear I will note the seuerall kinds of lukewarme Christians.

The first lukewarme professor, is the Papist; as the tenor of his religion, and the manner of his worship of God, doth plainly shew, for hee doth part stakes with Christ in the matter of saluation, affirming that he receiveth from Christ to worke out his owne saluation, and so as sumeth part of Christs glorie to himself.

Secondly, all *time servers* are lukewarme Gospellers: that is, all such as alter their religion with time and state: and of this sort are the bodie of our people, who professe themselves to bee of the same religion the Prince is of: which sheweth evidently, what they will doe in time to come, namely, turne with the time as their forefathers haue done.

The third sort, are the *followers of Nicodemus*, who came to Christ by night onely: that is, such as say and think that they may go to masse with their bodies, if they keep their harts vnto God, these halt betweene two opinions, and neither serue God nor Baal.

Fourthly, all *Mediators*: such as will make pacification betweene the religion of the Protestant and the Papists, so holding our religion, as not caring to embrace theirs also, because they think they differ not in substance, but in circumstances onely. Let these pretend what they will, they are in heart Laodiceans.

Fifthly, all *Worldlings*, which as Christ sayth, *Lu. 16. 13. Serue God and Mammon*, God and the world by setting their heart vpon riches. These men abound euery where, for though they heare God in the ministerie of his word, & as it were touch him in the Sacrament, yet their hearts are *fayre* from him, running after their couetousnesse, *Ezech. 33. 31.* and who are such their consciences will witness: yea, their behaviour proclaimes it to the world; for though they will heare the word, yet their wit and strength is spent vpon the world, and the things thereof.

Sixthly, those that professe Christs religion in outward actions of his worship, but yet in their liues, giue themselves to the common sinnes of the time, some to drunkennesse, to fornication, to couetousnesse, or crueltie: some to this sinne, and some to that. To this sort, we must referre those, that in word approoue religion, and yet their hearts delight is, in garnishing themselves with the monstrous, brutish, and irreligious formes of strange and forreine attire: These spend their time and wit in the decking of their bodies, and so suffer their soules to goe to wracke; when as apparell should bee an occasion to put vs in mind of a shame through sinne: and by modest attire, we should

should expresse the vertues of the heart, but these hereby professe the vanitie of their mind.

Now, though we be not intangled with these grosse sinnes, yet we cannot excuse our selues from this sinne of luke-warmnesse. For the want of zeale of Gods glory, of loue to his truth, of care to obey his commandements, & to keepe good conscience, the want of hatred of sinne, what argue all these but luke-warmnesse? Herein wee must lay our hand vpon our mouth with *Iob*; for wee cannot plead with God, no not for this common sin. But that we may be out of all doubt that this sinne of luke-warmnesse, hath infected our congregations, as it did this Church of Laodicea: I wil make it plain by the signes therof, which are common among vs, that so wee may the better know our fearefull estate.

The first signe is, *Negligence in the duties of that true Religion which wee professe*: This appeareth sundry wayes: for first, howsoeuer wee come to the assemblies where the word is preached, yet few doe profit there; by increase in the knowledge of that Religion which is taught, & in the amendment of life. This may any man see to be true, that hath halfe an eye to looke into the state of our assemblies, and mens owne consciences will herein witnesse against them. Again, where Gods word is ordinarily heard, there are very few that spend any time in searching out, and trying whether the things be so or not which are taught them. Nay men will not bee at cost to buy a Bible: & if they haue one, yet they will not take paines to read the same, at least in such a constant course as they ought to doe. Thirdly, the Lords Sabaoth is broken, for though most men at set times will come into the congregation; yet there is not that priuat sanctifying of the Sabaoth after the congregations are dissolved, which Gods word requireth; but men betake themselves to their owne affaires, and to outward delights; to omit those that haue no care at all of sanctifying the Sabaoth in any sort. Now these persons must needs want both knowledge, obedience, and all sound grace, that will not set apart some time, wherein they should employ themselves in Gods word: And by these signes it is euident, that

there is a greuous disease of negligence in the duties of Religion, that infects our congregations. Now where this negligence is, though coldnesse bee not, there cannot be zeale, and so luke-warmnesse must needs abound.

II. Signe of luke-warmnesse: The Religion of most men is this; In the generall calling of a Christian they shew religion, but in the affaires of their particular callings where is religion? In the Church they are good Christians, but in practise of the duties of their particular callings, who sheweth his religion? For when as men should practise their callings, according to Gods word and true godlinesse, they follow the desires of their owne hearts. Little conscience is made of lying and oppression: that loue and plaine dealing, which ought to be between man and man, is wanting; which prooueth them plainly to bee luke-warme Gospellers.

III. Signe. There bee many that professe themselves to be luke-warme, neither hot nor cold. For though all generally come to the hearing of the word, & the receiuing of the Sacraments, yet many when they see some make conscience to become answerable in some measure to the word which they heare, and the Sacraments which they receiue, doe take vp in their mouthes this slander of precizenesse against them: mocking them for doing that which in the word & sacraments themselves professe should be done. These men will not be enemies to the religion of Christ; and they professe themselves not to be zealous, by reproaching zeale in others: Therefore they do more than these Laodiceans did, even professe themselves to be lukewarm. For he that reproacheth another for zeale in religion, brandeth himselfe with this sin of luke-warmnesse. And who knowes not how many of this sort are euerie where? I dare with good conscience say, our congregations generally consist of such. Now marke what followeth hereupon.

First, that our common professors of religion are in worser case than heathen men, Iewes and Turkes, that know not Christ. This Christ teacheth in preferring cold persons before the luke-warm; as if hee should say; I had rather thou

werest a Pagan, than a professor without zeale. And (a) Saint Peter to this purpose speaking of such faith; *It had bene better they had neuer knowne the way of truth, than after they haue knowne it, not to obey the commandments of God.* So that vnlesse there be further matter in vs than knowledge & bare profession, our case is worse than the case of Iewes and Turkes. Religion knowne will not make thee better than them, but it is zeale and obediene that must preferre thee before them.

Secondly, from the consideration of our estate, I gather that we are in danger to be spewed out of the mouth of Christ, as luke-warme water out of the stomack. This is the punishment here threatned, which was written for our instruction, that we might know where luke-warmnesse takes place, there this punishment will follow. We may flatter our selues as the men in the old world did, & think all is well, neuer regarding til the iudgement come: but the truth is, that in regard of this sinne, wee are in danger to be cut off from the church, and from true societie with Christ: God can do this sundry wayes, either by bereauing vs of his Gospell, and making vs as the heathen; or by sending the enemy among vs, to destroy and root vs out of this land; and euen in our neighbour countries, & townes, hee sets spectacles before vs, that by them we may see how he can spew vs out, & cut vs off from being a people. And thus much of the first fault, namely, luke-warmnes.

Verf. 17. *For thou saist, I am rich, & made rich, and haue need of nothing, and knowest not how thou art wretched and miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked.*

Here is the second sin of this Church, namely, spirituall pride. The words depend vpon the former, as a reason therof: before he charged them with deadnesse in religion, and here hee painteth out the cause thereof; namely, spirituall pride of hart. As if he should say, Thou thinkest thus within thy selfe, *I am rich*, for it is the manner of the Scripture to expresse the thoughts of men by their speeches; because the thoughts of men, are as euident to Christ, as any mans speeches can be to another.

The Vse.

In that Christ doth expresse mens secret thoughts and propound the same in

this booke; we may hence gather, that it is a part of Canonical Scripture, for it is a priuiledge of the scriptures to set downe the thoughts of countries, of churches, & of particular men, euen as they conceiue them. This can no man do in any booke of his own deuising. And hence we may gather an argument against Atheists, That scriptures are the word of God, because they reueale mens secret thoughts.

Now followeth the thought it selfe of the Angell & people of this church, *I am rich*, that is, I haue many excellent gifts and graces of Gods spirit: by this effect he expresseth their spirituall pride, in ouerweening their estate before God. This is a common sinne in the world, & euer hath bene. Christ said, (a) *Hee came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*; by righteous meaning such as think themselves righteous. And (b) the proud Pharisee in his prayer, which hee conceiued in his heart, thought himselfe *farre better, than the poore Publican, or other men.* And Paul (c) bringeth in the Corinthians thinking proudly of themselves, saying; *We are full & made rich, &c.* This sinne takes place in the papists at this day; who perswade themselves, that they can satisfie Gods iustice by temporal works, & fulfill the law of God, and merit for themselves, and for others.

To come to our selues: this same proud thought hath place among vs. First, wee think we are rich, in regard of knowledge: both yong and old scorne to be catechized, because they would not seeme to be ignorant: some sticke not to profess this pride by bragging thus, that they know as much for substance as any man can teach the, when as indeed they know nothing, but that which nature will teach a man. II. men plead that they haue a most firme faith, so as they neuer doubted of Gods mercie; which is nothing but the presumption of a proud heart; for true faith is troubled with doubting. Thirdly men will proteste, that they are rich in loue, both towards God & their neighbours; when as they loue the world, and the pleasures thereof, more than Christ; and so haue no true loue of God in their harts. III. (to make more plain, that this spiritual pride reigns in mens harts) mark this: let any bodily calamity bee made knowne to a man, that is newly befallen him,

(a) 1. Pe. 2. 21

(a) Lu. 5. 32

(b) Lu. 18. 9.

(c) 1. Cor. 4. 8

him, oh how is he presently perplexed! but let Gods Minister out of his word, make knowne vnto him his inward fearful estate: that by reason of sinne, hee is in danger of Gods iudgements; & a fire-brand of hell, hee is not afraid. Worldly newes doth affright men much, when as the threatnings of the word moue them nothing. What argueth this; but that their hearts are forestalled with this false conceit, *I am rich*. The drunkard in his drunkenness, the filthy person in his uncleanness, and euery man in his sinne sootheth himselfe with this, *Gods mercies full, I am rich, and in his fauour, hee will not condemne me*. Well, it being thus manifest that spirituall pride is our common sin; We must labour to see it in our selues, & vse al good means that it may be remooued. The means follow afterwards;

And increased with goods: or, am made rich, so the words are: these words are added onely for amplification to shew, that this church had not any small portion, but an exceeding measure of spiritual pride: The doubling of the words, sheweth the strength of this conceit. Whats the cause that this church was growne to such an height of pride? *Answe*. It may be it was knowledge, wherewith no doubt the Angell of this church, & many therein did abound: now the holy ghost saith (a) *That knowledge puffeth vp*. This is true in all places: great knowledge, (without speciall grace) great pride. This is the sin of the Schools of learning. Where knowledge abounds, there pride of heart abounds, & men are puffed vp according to the measure of their gifts, vnlesse by his grace and the sight of their sins, God do humble them.

And haue need of nothing. This is a further signe of their great pride, that they thought they needed not the helpe of any thing, or any person beside themselves: And all such as thinke they haue no need of the blood of Christ for the washing away of their sins, do surfet and abound with this spirituall pride of hart. This serues further to conuince our congregations of this damnable spirituall pride. If any one be sicke in bodie, hee straight sendeth to the Physitian; but not one of a thousand seeketh to the minister till the pangs of death draw neere. The soules disease by sin is not felt; there

is no complaint for want of the blood of Christ. But if we would be emptied of this pride, we must labour to see that wee stand in need of Christ, and euery drop of his blood; til such time as we feele that in vs, there is no goodnesse in our hearts: Wee are but the proud Laodiceans; and our case is wretched and damnable.

And knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked. Christ intending to strike this sinne of pride to the verie heart, doth here set downe the true cause thereof; to wit, *Ignorance*, as if he should say, Thou knowest not thine owne natural estate, as thou art borne of *Adam* out of Christ, and therefore thou art proud, and thy pride maketh thee luke-warm. Then he sheweth whereof they were ignorant, namely, of their naturall estate.

For the first, Christ making Ignorance the cause of their pride, teacheth vs that pride is not the first sin, that euer was in the world; as many both Papists and others haue thought. True it is, pride is a great and mother sinne, and the cause of many fowle iniquities: but yet ignorance is a mother sin, whereof pride springeth. The cause why any person swellies with pride in himselfe, is ignorance of his own natural estate. By this then we are taught to learne to know our owne estate, what wee are by nature in our selues without Christ, for that is the way to pull downe our hearts. For this cause the Prophets of God vsed to call men, *To a searching of themselves*, Zeph. 2.1. when they would bring the people to humilitie and grace, that men seeing their estate, by reason of their sinnes to be damnable, might bee humbled and caused to forsake themselves, and come vnto Christ. And surely till such time as men bee humbled for their sinnes, they will neuer get sound grace, but bee as the proud Pharisee, hypocrites and dissemblers, though they haue much knowledge. But when a man hath searched his naturall estate, then besides knowledge of himselfe come other most excellent graces, as humilitie, the feare of God, and true obedience with good conscience. And therefore first of all, let vs labor to be acquainted with our owne estate in our selues, and with our personall sins, & with Gods iudgements

due vnto vs for them. For this is the ground of true grace. The spots and blemishes of our bodies, we can soone espy, and wipe away: and why should we bee lesse carefull of our soules, which be farre better?

That Christ might fully make known vnto them their ignorance of themselves, it pleaseth him to describe to them their naturall estate, & so proportionally the naturall condition of all churches, & of all people: which is the state of mans misery. This hee propoundeth two waies: first generally in these words, *and knowest not how thou art wretched and miserable*: then by the parts therof, which be three, *Pauertie, blindnesse, and nakednesse*.

For the first. The word translated *wretched*, signifieth, one subiect to calamities, griefs, and in a word, to all miseries. And that we may know who is thus wretched I wil enter into a description of mans misery; whereof that we may conceiue aright, two things are to bee considered: First, the root and fountaine thereof; for therein wee shall best see what miserie meaneth. This root is *original sinne*, and it hath two branches: First, that particular transgression whereby *Adam* sinned, which was not only the sin of his person, but also of the whole nature of man, spreading it self to all his posterity, Christ excepted. Secondly, the defacing of gods Image, and the corrupting of mans hart, which by reason of the fall of our first parents, hath in it a pronenesse vnto all sin, both in wil, affection, and in all the faculties of the soule. In these two stands original sin; and in them, & with them must wee conceiue of mans misery, as in the root thereof. Secondly, we must conceiue of mans misery vnder the forme of punishment, hauing relation to the first sin of *Adam*, and to the corruption of each mans nature thereby receiued. The punishment of sin, must be considered sundry waies, according to the diuers kind of mans being: either in this world, or after. For it is either in this life, or at the end of this life, or after this life. And so accordingly is misery to be considered.

Now of the punishments in this life, some concerne the whole man, some the parts of man, some his estate. Punishments concerning the whole man, bee of two sorts: The first is subiection to the

wrath of God, whereby a man since *Adams* fall is made the child of wrath, a miserie of all miseries; & yet the more greivous, because without some grace, a man cannot discern & see the same. The second is *a bondage vnder the diuill*, whereby a man in his mind, will, and affections, is subiect euery way to the will of the diuill, which though we cannot describe, yet we may thus conceiue of it. The regenerate man saith, *I sin, but I would not sin*: The natural man saith, *I sin, and I will sin*: It is my nature to sin, & my delight; and this was the state of this church.

Punishments concerning the parts of man, be either miseries of his soule, or of his body: the miseries of his soule be these: First, in the vnderstanding, ignorance of Gods will. And in sundry, madnesse, and foolishnesse; and in all men pain and difficulty, both to learn & remember whatsoeuer is good, which was not in man by creation. In the conscience also, be accusations, secret feares, and terrors. In the will, is rebellion to Gods will. In all affections, perversnesse. All which are miseries of the soule.

The body also hath these miseries. It is subiect to all infirmities, sicknesse, diseases, & aches; which are so many, as all the books of Physitians neither doe nor can record the same. II. Mans body is mortall, and subiect to temporall death; which no man can possibly auoid or preuent by all the art and skill in the world.

Punishments of mans estate, concerne either his goods, or calling. In goods there be these miseries; want of things necessarie, for by reason of sin it is a punishment, & in it own nature a curse: and all the hurts that come by the creatures: for their enmity towards man, & towards one another; as also their subiection to vanitie: all these be miseries, and the punishments of mans sin. In mans calling there is miserie: for therein man is subiect to trouble, to losses, & sorrow; which come as a punishment of mans first sin. And all these bee the miseries of man in this life.

At the end of this life, comes *bodily death*, the seperation of soule and body asunder; which in it selfe is a most fearefull curse, for so, it is the very gate of hell. But after this life, is the accomplishment of all miseries, & that is *eternal destruction* and

and condemnation to hell fire, which to bee the end of all miserie, appears by this, because it is a seperation of mans person from the societie & presence of God: & an enduring of Gods wrath in the whole person, even in the place of the diuell and damnable souls, & that not for a time, but for euer and euer eternally. And thus we see what punishment is, and answerably what miserie is, whereby we may see what it is to be wretched, namely in a word to be subiect to all miseries, whether wee consider them in the root thereof, original sin; or under the forme of punishment, in this life, in the whole person, and in soule & body generally, in goods and calling, at the end of this life, and in the world to come.

The proper end that mooues Christ to say to this church, *she knew not that she was wretched*, is this; to teach this church and in them vs, and all Churches, to learne to know their owne miseries, to feele the same, and to be touched in conscience for them. Wee therefore must learne not to flatter our selues with hope of our good state: but labour to see our miserie both in sin, & the punishment thereof. And seeing it, strive to be touched with it, that we may cry with the Iewes, *(a) What shall we do to be sau- d?* for till such time as this in some measure be wrought in vs, wee shall be but luke-warme professors, hauing a shew of godlinesse, but wanting the power thereof: The true sight of our misery is the gift and grace of God, but yet we must vse all good meanes, that we may come to see the same, and to be touched with it, that so wee may haue hearts hereby fit to receiue the Gospell, which contains the remedie of this our miserie.

And miserable, that is, *worthy to be pitied*: this is added, not to set downe another thing, but to expresse the greatnesse of their miserie, as if he should say, Thy miserie is not smal, but so great and so grievous, as indeed thou art in that regard to be pitied of all men.

Hence we learne, that we must not despise parties miserable by reason of their sins, or scorne and centeinne them. But contrariwise lament & pitie them. When David saw men sin, and so pull heaps of miseries vpon them, *(b) hee shed rimers of tears*. The Lord makes it a good mans propertie *(c) to mourne for the abominations of the people*. Ieremias *(d)* for the sins of

the people wished his head were full of water. And iult *Lot (e)* greued his righteous hart for the abominations of Sodome. It was the fault of the Corinthians, which *Paul* reprooueth, that when the incestuous man had sinned that grievous sin, *(f) they were not humbled, but puffed with contempt against the parti*. And it is a fault in sundry men at this day, that they are not humbled in themselves when they see other men sin. We must not do so, but shew the grace wee haue aboue others, in beeing grieued for the miseries which men with out grace by their sins pull daily vpon them. Thus much of their miserie in generall.

The parts of their miserie are three, which Christ noteth particularly, that if it were possible, he might cause this church to lay aside this damnable pride; for these in all men are maine miseries. The first is pouertie: *And poore*: that is properly one that hath not a rag to his back, nor bread to his mouth, vnlesse hee begge the same of others. But here it is taken for one that is spirituall poore: which pouertie we shal better conceiue, if we do vnderstand what be true spirituall riches. True riches be Gods grace & fauor in Christ; as the pardon of sin, and life euerlasting. The poore man therefore is he, that wanteth Gods fauor for the remission of his sins, and the gift of eternal life: & hath in him no good thing that is acceptable to God; but in regard of his soule, is as silly and poor, as any begger in regard of his body.

The end why Christ calleth this church poore, is to beat downe the proud conceit of her owne good estate, & to cause her to feele her spirituall pouertie, and so become poore in spirit. And we in them are likewise taught to labour to *feele our owne pouerty*, how by nature there is no goodnesse in vs; but wee are viterly delitute of the grace & fauor of God, that so we may goe out of our selues, and in regard of our selues euen despaire of our saluation: for till this pouertie of spirit be wrought in vs, wee may make a shew in profession, heare the word, and receiue the Sacraments, but we shall neuer haue sound grace. And blessed were our estate if we could lay aside that diuinish pride, which puffeth vp our harts, and become poore in spirit; then were wee in the right way to receiue the Gospell, and the graces

(e) 2. Pet. 2. 7-8

(f) 1. Cor. 5

(a) Act. 1. 37.

The 7th.

(b) Ps. 119. 136.

(c) Ezek. 9. 4

(d) Ier. 9. 1

graces thereof: but till we be beggers in our selues, wee neuer begin to bee rich in Christ.

How can Christ truly charge this church with pouertie; for the Laodiceans were a rich people, & had great store of wealth? *Ans.* True it is, they were rich in wealth as histories shew, and yet poor to God. For al honour and wealth in the world, is nothing without the grace and fauor of God in Christ. *Paul* saith, *(a)* *Wee are compleat in Christ*: forth of him therefore we haue nothing. To the Corinthians he saith, *(b)* *All things are yours, & you Christs, and Christ is Gods*. But nothing is ours till we haue Christ, and Christ vs.

(a) Col. 2. 10.

(b) 1 Cor. 3
22, 23.

The Vse.

As it was with this church, so it is with all other. Every person and all people are but poore, and beggerly, if they want Christ: and therefore if God haue giuen any man riches and wealth, hee must lay this good foundation; vs them as helps to further his saluation; for by them hee may attaine to the meanes of saluation, and also shew forth the fruits of faith. But they that haue wealth & vse it otherwise, shall find it turne to their deeper condemnation.

The second part of their misery, is *blindnesse*. *Quest.* How can they be said to bee blind; for they had a learned teacher no doubt, that both was able, and did teach the will of God; and the people likewise knew the points of religion, and beleued the Gospell? *Ans.* They had knowledge indeed, but yet they were blind: first, because they knew not their own estate. If a man had all skill in all Arts and sciences, & great knowledge in the word: yet if he know not himselfe in some measure, he is but a blind man. Secondly, because they did not know God in Christ: They knew no doubt, that there was a God, and that Christ was a Sauour, but they could not apply it to themselves, to be able to say, God is my God, Christ my Redeemer, and the holy Ghost my Sanctifier. Thirdly, because they could not discern of things that did differ; as betweene good and euill, betweene euill and euill, and betweene temporal things, and eternall blessings: This spiritual discerning, is a gift of Gods grace.

The Vse.

In that Christ saith, *They were blind*, though they had knowledge; wee may learne, that al knowledge is but meer ig-

norance before God; to those persons that know not themselves, & God to be their God in Christ. For want hereof Christ calleth the angett of this church *blind*, though otherwise hee were a very learned man. Which must teach vs, not to rest content with any humane learning, no not with the literal knowledge of the Gospell, but wee must labour further to know our selues, and to know God in Christ, & Christ our redeemer: and be able in some good sort to discern between things that differ. *Dauid* a most worthy Prophet intituleth the 32. Psalm, *his learning*. What learning sheweth hee there? *Ans.* Surely nothing but the knowledge of the pardon of his sinnes. And indeed that is it which seasoneth al our learning: and therefore about all things wee must labour for it.

The third part of their misery, is *Nakednes*. Nakednes is twofold; to the eye of man, & to god. Nakednes to the eye of man is bodily, & that is also twofold: either that which was before the fall in the bodies of our first parents, whereby their bodies being vncouered, appeared verie glorious without shame: or that which is after the fall, whereby the bodie being naked & bare, appears full of shame; which is so excessiue, by reason of mans sin, that if necessity would permit, the whole bodie both face & hands should al be couered. Nakednes before God, is when any man lies before God, a deformed sinner. In this case *Moses* saw the Israelites, *(a)* *when they had made a golden calfe*; for thereby they deprived themselves of Gods Image, and were guilty of that most greivous sin of Idolatry. This is a misery of al miseries; and the greatest nakednes that can be: And this is the nakednes of this church in this place. *Quest.* Why doth Christ call them naked? *Ans.* To moue them, & in their persons all professors to haue care not to fly from God, *(b)* *and to hide their sins with Adam*, but to bring themselves into his presence, & there lay open their sins, that they may obtaine a couering for them by Christ. It is the practise of the world, to hide their sinnes from men; but neuer to care how bare & naked they bee in the sight of God, who yet teeth them all as plainly as wee see the sores of any poore lazer that shewes the same to moue our pitie towards him: which

(a) Exod. 32.

250

(b) Job 31. 33

which if we could see, we should be ashamed not to seeke to couer our sinnes before God. We must therefore labor in our owne consciences to see the nakednesse of our soules before God; and seeke to be touched and humbled for the same, that so we may earnestly intreat for the righteousnesse of Christ, to be a couering to cloath our soules. This was *Dauid* practise, for when hee saith, *Blessed are they whose sins are couered*, Psal. 32. 1. he would giue vs to vnderstand, that he vned to vncouer his sins, & lay them open before God; that at his hands in Christ, he might get a couer for them.

These are the particular parts of a mans miserie, which every man must labour to feele in himselfe, if hee would be partaker of the righteousnesse of Christ: for thus hath Christ both in generall and in particular, set downe the miserie of this Church; that he might prepare them to receiue the blessed comfort which followeth in the next verse.

Verse. 18. *I counsell thee to buy of me gold tryed by the fire, that thou maist bee made rich: and white raiment that thou maist be clothed, and that thy filthy nakednesse doe not appeare: and annoint thy eye with eye-salue that thou maist see.*

Here beginneth the counsel of Christ vnto this Church. Wherein, first he propoundeth a notable remedie for her miserie before noted. In this remedie, wee are to consider three things: the manner of prescribing it; the remedie it selfe; and the meanes whereby it is obtained.

For the first, this remedie is propounded; not in any sharpe commandement, but by a milde and gentle aduise, *I counsell thee*. And herein Christ doth take to himselfe the office of the Counsellor of his Church. For as God hath his Church and people, so he hath his counsellors, by whom in mercie hee hath reuealed his counsell vnto his Church. The principall counsellor is Christ; so he saith in the person of Wisdom, Pro. 8. 14. *Counsell is mine*. And *Isay* saith; *To vs a Child is borne: and he shall call his name, wonderful, COUNSELLER, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*: yea, he is both King & Counsellor to his Church. The office Christ challengeth to himselfe for these causes: first, because he

adulseth his Church, touching the way whereby they must escape euermlasting death, & come to eternall life. Secondly, because he teacheth them how they may practise euery busines, so as it may please God. Thirdly, because he teacheth them how they may in grievous danger & distresses, find a good issue, or else bee able with patience to bear them. These things he worketh daily in his Church, not by extraordinarie means, but ordinarily by his word & spirit; and therefore may iustly challenge this honour to be called *the Counsellor of his Church*.

From this office of Christ, wee learne *The Vse*, two things. First, to doe all the honour and reuerence we can vnto his Maiestie; for he is our professed Counsellor, who imployes himselfe for the good of his Church. Counsellors of the State and of the Law, are highly honoured and respected of all sort, euen for their counsell in worldly matters, though often it faile: how much more ought wee to honour Christ our heavenly Counsellor, whose counsell leadeth vnto glorie, and is stable and sure for euer? Looke how much his counsell excelleth theirs, so much ought he to be honoured aboue them all. Secondly, in all distresses and grievous temptations, and dangers either of soule or body, wee must take counsell and aduise from Christ Iesus: for to this end doth hee reueale himselfe to bee a counsellor, that men in distresse comming to him, by his aduise might bee comforted and eased. When *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Mount Seir* banded themselves against *Juda*, the people were in great distresse and danger; but mark what good king *Iehosaphat* did, he betooke himselfe to the Lord his counsellor; saying, *Lord we know not what to doe, but our eyes are towards thee*. 2. Chron. 20. 12. that is, direct thou vs in this daunger, for of our selues we know not how to escape. This practise ought to be followed of all men, especially in time of any danger; such as these daies are by reason of sinne. The counsell of Wizards, Sorcerers, and Astrologians, ought not to be sought after; but by prayer wee ought to humble our selues, and call only and continually on this our only true counsellor.

II. Point. The remedie it selfe: which hath relation to the former Verse, for there

there hee set downe the miserie of this Church, in three parts : which were all great miseries. And here he so propoundeth his remedie, that it is answerable to their miseries in the severall parts therof. For first, here is *gold* to make them *rich*, answerable to their pouertie ; Secondly, *raiments* to hide their *nakednesse* ; Thirdly, *oyntment* to take away their *blindnesse*.

For the first ; by *gold*, according to the Analogie of the Scripture, we are to vnderstand the *graces of Gods spirit* : as *true faith, repentance, the feare of God, love of God, and the true love of man* : 1. Pet. 1. 7. *Faith is compared to gold in the triall sheweth of* : and so may all other gifts of the spirit be hereby vnderstood. Secondly, by *gold*, we are to vnderstand *Christs merits* ; yea, *Christ himselfe*, as the fountaine of all grace.

This *gold* is further said, to be *tryed by the fire* : that is, most pure and precious *gold* purged from all dross, as fine as can be made by the art of man. This is added to expresse the propertie of Gods graces and gifts ; namely, that they are more precious vnto God than *gold* ; Yea, *than gold tryed by the fire* : as *Peter* saith.

By this euery person is taught, how to beautifie themselues both in soule & body : It is the common blind opinion of the world, that forraigne attyre and rich Jewels do adorne the body ; and indeed in some cases the bodie may bee adorned with pearles and Jewels : but the right way to adorne any person indeed is, to furnish the soule with these graces of the spirit, which vnto God be more precious than fine gold. Our bodies and soules ought to be the dwelling places of the *Holy Ghost* ; & therefore we must adorne them, and make them fit for so worthy a Guest : which must be done, by the good graces of the spirit, and not by strange and forraigne attyre, which no good man could euer abide.

Secondly, these graces haue a further effect than to beautifie ; and that is, to *make rich*. Here then see the common folly, yea the spirituall madnesse of men in the world ; who spend all their time, wit, and strength, to furnish their houses with treasure, & to enrich their bodies ; and in the meane time leaue their soules vngarnished. What a madnesse is this,

that men should neglect the true riches, and follow after that which is nothing els, but counterfeit copper ? Seeing therefore Gods graces bee the true treasure which fadeth not, let vs seeke after them, as Wisdome counselleth : Pro. 8. 10. 11.

Receiue mine instruction, and not silver : and knowledge rather than fine gold : For wisdom is better than precious stones. The second part of this remedie is, a *white garment* ; that is, *Christ himselfe, and his righteousness imputed*.

So *Paul* saith, (a) *All* (a) Gal. 3. 27.

that are baptized into Christ haue put on Christ ; There Christ is made a garment, whom euery one that beleueth in him doth put on. Again, the fruits of the spirit are a garment ; and therefore wee are commanded to (b) *put on tender mercie,* (b) Col 3. 12.

kindnesse, humblenesse of minde, meeknesse, and low suffering. Further, Christ sheweth the end of this garment ; namely, to *cover the nakednesse of our soules* : *left the filthinesse thereof, which we by our sins haue brought vpon vs, doe appeare.* The third part of this remedie, is *annoynting with eye salue* ; where, by *eye salue*, wee must vnderstand the *spirit of Illumination and knowledge wrought in the mind by the Holy Ghost*, whereby men know themselues and their estate : for as eye-salve sharpens the eyes and cleares the sight, where it was by some occasion dimmed : so doth Christ by the Illumination of the spirit, make a man know God in Christ, and to discern betweene good and euill, and betweene things temporall, and blessings eternall.

Thus wee haue the meaning of the words : whereby we may see, that by all these three, wee can vnderstand nothing else but Christ himselfe, and his merits. Now one and the same thing in Christ, is signified by diuers tearmes : to shew that there is in Christ the fulnesse of all grace, and plentiful redemption ; yea, store of supplies for all our wants. The *Laodiceans* were poore, but Christ was their riches ; they were naked, Christ was their garment ; and lastly, they were blind, but Christ was their eye-salve. So that what wants soeuer be in vs, there is store of supply thereof in Christ. This must the more diligently be marked, because the Papists make Christ but halfe a Sauiour, in putting our merits vnto his : and so disgrace him in his glorious worke, wherein hee is a most absolute Sauiour,

and

and Redeemer.

III. point. The meanes whereby these worthy gifts of God may bee gotten, is by buying and bargaining: so Christ saith: *I counsell thee to buy of mee.* Where he alludeth to the outward state of this Citie; for it was rich, and also giuen to much trafficke, as Histories record: and therefore hee speakes to them in their owne kind, as if he should say, you are a people exercised in much trafficke, and delighted with nothing more than buying and selling: well, I haue wares that will serue your turne; as *gold, garments, and oyle*, therefore come *and buy of mee.* These words must not bee vaderstood properly, for so wee can buy nothing of Christ; because there is nothing that is good in any, but it proceedeth from the free gift of God in Christ. This is onely spoken by way of resemblance to buying and selling; which stands in these points, which are the principall things in bargaining. First a man sees his want, and desires to haue it supplied; and therefore goes to the place where such things are to be sold. Secondly, he seeth the thing and he liketh it. Thirdly, he prizeth and valueth it. Fourthly, he maketh exchange for it, by money or money worth. Fifthly, if it be a great summe, he giueth earnest. So in the getting of Christ, there is a kind of resemblance to all these. First, a man must feelee himselfe, to stand in need of Christ and his merits; because men see want of bread, meat, and drinke in their houses, therefore doe they goe to buy the same. Now looke how sensibly any man feeles these worldly wants; so euidently should we feelee our want of Christ, and his merits. For this is the first beginning that causeth vs to seeke to receiue Christ Iesus. Secondly, feeling our wants, wee should hunger & long after Christ, that we might be made partakers of him and the vertue of his merits: as a man that is to buy a thing doth take a liking therof, which doth stir vpa desire in him to buy, so must we labor to haue liking of Christ, which will moue vs to seeke vnto him. *I say. 55. 1. Hee, all that thirst, come & buy:* so that none make this bargain, but he that thirsteth. Thirdly we must prize & value Christ aboue all things in this world, euen at so high a rate that wee account al things in regard of him *to be but*

lost; yea, euen dross & dung, (a) as Paul did: (a) Phil. 3. 8.

Fourthly we must make exchange. How? we can giue Christ nothing but his owne? *Ans.* Properly there is no exchange, and therefore he saith: *I say. 55. 1. He, come and buy without money, for nothing.* Simon Magus, is heauily checked and accursed, for offering to buy the gifts of the holy ghost, Acts 8. 20. And yet there is an exchange to be made, *We must giue him our sin, and receiue his righteousness;* & therefore he is said, 2. Cor. 5. 21. *To be made sin for vs, that we should be made the righteousness of God in him.* See a most blessed exchange; for our sin & shame, we receiue his blessed grace & righteousness. *Quest.* How is this exchange made? *Ans.* In the practise of faith & repentance; for when we humble our selues and confesse our sins, praying earnestly for remission, & beleue our reconciliation by Christ, then is hee our righteousness. Lastly, though we can giue nothing vnto Christ, yet hee giueth vnto vs an earnest in this bargain: to wit, some portion of Gods (b) spirit, and some small measure of his graces; as grace to bewaile our sins, to humble our selues, and to pray for the pardon of them, with purpose not to sin againe, these bee the earnest of this bargain: And thus is Heauen bought and sold between Christ and vs; the receiuing of his true sauings graces be they neuer so small: euen as a penie is a sufficient earnest for a bargain of a hundred pounds.

Here we see we are commanded to buy. *The Vse.* Christ, and to make a bargain with him, whereby we may haue right to him and his merits. But how goes the case with the world? surely many come where this bargain is offered, but few there be that buy. Wee are like to Passengers on the sea, who see many goodly buildings, sumptuous cities, & fruitfull Islands, but they make no purchase of them; they onely praise them, as they behold them, and so passe by: so wee come and heare the doctrine of Christ and his merits, and approue of the same: but where is the partie that maketh this bargain? Come to particular points, and it will appeare that few bargain for Christ. For who feeles his own misery as he ought? Who perceiues himselfe to stand in such need of Christ as he doth? worldly wants wee feelee

N.B.

(b) Eph. 1. 13.
2. Cor. 1. 22.

feele and are affected with them, but in regard of spirituall wants, wee are sencelesse; and yet til we truly feele our miserie, we neuer come to make this bargain with Christ. Againe, come to our desire & hungering after Christ: In bodily thirst and hunger, wee can say; *I hunger, or I thirst*: but who can say, *I hunger & thirst* after Christ and his righteousnesse? Alas, our hearts are full, we feele no want: nay they are dead, we feare none euill; and as for our valuing and esteeming of Christ, we are plaine *Gaderers* and *Esau's*, wee preferre the world and the basest things therein before Christ. And for the exchange; we are loth to part with our sins, & to put on Christs righteousnesse. Which plainly shewes wee make no exchange, and though we bee willing to lay heapes of sins on Christs, yet who takes Christs righteousnesse and declares the same by the fruites thereof. And lastly, for the earnest of the spirit, though some there be that haue receiued it, yet the bodie of our people as their consciences can tell them, haue not receiued it: for they want knowledge, faith, and other graces.

By all these, it is more than manifest, that this bargain is not made: And yet true it is, that for worldly & base bargains he must rise early that must goe beyond them. But what a shame is this, that wee should be so expert in vile earthly things, and haue no regard of this excellent and heavenly bargain? Wherefore seeing Christ calleth vs hereunto; let vs make this one bargain with him, and that presently; which wee shall testifie by doing the five former duties; let vs neuer be at rest, till we may say each one for himselfe, I haue bargained with Christ, and receiued his earnest. Yea, our care should be that this bargain be made not with vs alone, but with our children. Many are forward to bring vp their children in good trades, wherein they may buy and sell for their liuing, wherein they doe well, but withall, they ought to bee as carefull to teach them to make this bargain with Christ, and then they doe farre better. For this is the cheapest & the chiefeest marchandize that euer was set to sale, which wee may buy without money, and yet it will make vs rich for euer. Manie labour in trafficke and take great paines, and yet

often loose thereby: but make this bargain once, and then thou shalt neuer loose it, nor any thing thereby, but continue for euer rich in God.

Vers. 19. *As many as I loue, I rebuke and chasten: bee zealous therefore, and amend.*

Because our Sauour Christ had so sharply rebuked this church, they might thereby take occasion to distrust, and despaire of his fauour and mercie: heere therefore it pleaseth him, to take away all occasion of doubting, after this sort. *If I use to rebuke and chasten all those whom I loue, then you are not to despaire of my mercie, by reason of my sharpe reproofe, whereby I haue threatened to spee you out of my mouth, for your sin of luke-warmnesse. But thus I use to deale with all those whom I loue; and therefore in this regard you need not to doubt of my loue and fauour.*

The meaning, *As many as I loue*: Christ loues the creatures two waies; as hee is *Creator*, and as he is *Redeemer*. As hee is the *Creator*, hee loues all his creatures, with a common & general loue, whether they be liuing or dead; reasonable or vnreasonable. As hee is *Redeemer*, he loues his creatures with a speciall and a peculiar loue; which is not common to all, but proper to that part of man-kinde, which is chosen to saluation before the world was. And of this peculiar loue hee speaketh here. *I rebuke*: The word in the originall which is translated, *Rebuke*, is more significant than can fitly bee expressed in any one English word; thus much is meant thereby, as if Christ had said; First, *I will conuince them of their sins, and after reproofe, admonish, and check them for the same. And chasten*. This must bee vnderstood of a kind of correction, which a father useth of his child, called *nurturing*; which is correction to breake the child of his fault and bad manners, and to teach him his duetie. This then is the meaning: All those whom I beare speciall fauour vnto, doe I conuince of their particular faults, and then checke and reproofe them and nurture them, as a Father doth his child: to make them leaue their particular vices, and to walke in obedience. And to assure vs that this is the true meaning, read Pro. 3. 12. whence the

the words are taken, & Heb. 12. 5. where they are more fully explained.

Here then Christ sets downe his ordinarie dealing with them, whome hee taketh and chooseth to be his disciples and members; namely, hee conuinceth them of their faults: hee reproveth and chasteneth them for this verie end, to breake them of their sinnes, and to bring them to reformation. And this dealing of Christ, belongeth to euerie seruant and member of Christ without exception: yea, Christ laieth rebukes and chastisements on al his children, & that in diuers measure, according to the nature of their sinnes, and the disposition of the parties. Such as are hardly broken of their sins, he laieth on them more heavy iudgements and chastisements, that they may bee brought to deeper humiliation, and so to true repentance. And therefore euerie one that would be a Disciple and member of Christ, must looke to go vnder his correction, and his sharpe and seuerer rebuke; according as they are in heart disposed vnto sinnes either more or lesse; *Hee must passe vnder the rod, that would come into the bond of the covenant*, Ezech. 20. 37.

The vse of this doctrine is twofold, set downe *Prov. 3. 12.* The first thus: *My Sonne: despise not the correction of the Lord, for the Lord correcteth whome hee loueth; his chastisements are tokens of his loue.* That is, whensoever the Lord either in the ministerie of his word reproveth thy sinnes, or by any affliction chasteneth thee, despise it not, neither set light by it, but make good vse thereof vnto thine owne soule. The second vse is, *Faine not when thou art corrected*: that is, let not the greatnesse of it daunt thee, but arme thy selfe with patience; because hee vseth to correct all those whome hee loueth, making his chastisements tokens of his loue.

Secondly, Christ here setteth before all gouernours, an example to follow, especially to fathers and masters: his example is this; *On euerie child that hee loueth, hee laieth corrections, for this end to breake them of their sinnes*: So answerably, Gouernours must shew tokens of loue towards those that are vnder them, by due reproofe and correction; that so

they may be broken of their misdeemeanor, and brought vnto obedience to God. It were to be wished, that both Parents and Maisters would follow Christ in this example, and so steake the reformation of those that be vnder them; but more lamentable is the case: Parents and Maisters doe thinke it sufficient for them, if they provide for their children and seruants food, and rayment, and necessities for the bodie: and so altogether neglect the good of their soules, which is the cause of many sinnes, and so of many iudgements; both which ought to mooue them to put in practise this dutie.

Thirdly, the verie order of Christs words, doth minister vnto vs a necessarie instruction, touching his manner of correcting his seruants. For first, hee propounds a direct end of all his corrections vpon them; to wit, their nurturing and reformation; then, that hee may attaine thereto, hee proceedeth thus: First, hee doth conuince their conscience of their sinnes, then by reproofes he rebukes and checks them, and lastly, correcteth them, by laying chastisements on them. A most excellent and blessed order, in vsing correction for the good of the partie chastised, which ought to bee followed of all Gouernours, parents, and maisters especially. First they must propound a good end of their correction, even the amendment and saluation of the partie; and that they may then proceed aright, they must first conuince their conscience of the fault, then reprove, checke, and admonish them: & if that take not place, they must proceed vnto meet and conuenient bodily correction: all which must bee done not for reuenge, but to bring them to amendment, and to make them obedient to the will of God. Whereby wee see how farre many parents and gouernours overshoot themselves, when as they make their corrections matters of reuenge and choller; wherein they seldome intend the reformation of the offender: which is a fault flat against the word of God; and therefore to be considered of every good Christian.

Be zealous; therefore and repent. In the former Verse he propoundeth a remedy against their *Spiritual pride*. In these

wordes hee doth directly propound a remedie against their *like-warmnesse*. But first obserue the coherence of these words with the former. Christ hath said; *Whom I loue I rebuke and correct, according as their fault is*: therefore sayth he to this Church, *because I haue rebuked and corrected thee by seuerer shrewdings, for thy like-warmnesse, therefore now become zealous and amend.*

Here see the proper end of all reproofs and corrections: namely, the reformation and amendment of mens faults and misdemeanors whatsoeuer, that so they may bee more carefull of their wayes, and more zealous in good duties than euer they were. Whensoever therefore wee are reproofed by the word of God; or when the Lord shall visit vs in bodie, mind, or goods by any kind of crosse, wee must remember to take occasion thereby to repent and amend, knowing that by all these, as by so many Sermons, the Lord cals vs to amendment.

Now cometo the remedie of their *like-warmnesse*; *Be zealous*. That wee may vnderstand this Commandement, we are to handle some points touching Zeale. First, what is zeale? Zeale is a burning affection in regard of Christian religion, and the true worship of God. This Zeale is compounded of two affections; of loue, and anger or indignation: so that in this commaundement are two duties enioyned vnto this Church. First, that they should loue Christ and his Religion about all things. Secondly, that they should be grieved especially for this, that Christ was dishonoured, his worship prophaned, and his doctrine not embraced; but in steed thereof false worship, and false doctrine entertained: when both these concur, then zeale is in the heart. A most notable example hereof wee haue in Christ: *Psalme. 69. 9.* where the Prophet David in his person saith, *The zeale of Gods house had eaten him vp.* Whereby thus much is signified, that the heat of his loue for the maintaining of his Fathers glorie, had euen consumed him: and that his indignation was so great, because his Fathers name was dishonoured, and his worship prophaned; that it did euen eat him vp.

This wee shall see to bee true in Christ, if wee read the Hystorie of his life, *Iohn 3. 17.* yea hee professeth of himselfe, *that it was meat and drinke vnto him, to doe his Fathers will*, *Ioh. 4. 34.* That thing he preferred before his owne life or safetie: nay, for the accomplishment thereof, hee was content to suffer the pangs of hell. The like zeale was in *Elias*, when all Israel was fallen to Idolatrie; *his heart was zealous for the Lord of Hosts. 1. King. 19. 14.*

II. point; The kinds of zeale. Zeale is either good or bad: In good zeale are these things required. I. True faith, as the roote thereof; *1. Tim. 1. vers. 5.* *The end of the commandment is loue out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith vnfeined.* Now, one part of zeale is loue; and therefore as loue proceeds from true faith, so must true zeale also: and that which is not grounded on faith, is rather rashnesse and fiercenesse of nature, than true zeale. II. Repentance; *2. Cor. 7. 11.* There are seuen fruits of repentance recited, whereof zeale is one, that is good zeale: Euen a burning loue of true Religion, and a godly indignation when false religion is embraced. There may bee zeale in a man that hath no repentance; as was in *Iehu*, *2. King. 10. 16.* *Come with mee,* (sayth hee) *and see the zeale that I haue for the Lord.* Yet he wanted repentance, for verse 29. 31. It is said, *Iehu regarded not to walke in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for hee departed not from the sinnes of Ieroboam, which made Israel to sinne*: and therefore he had not in him the true zeale that is here commanded. III. Zeale must come from knowledge: for without knowledge it is but rashnesse and bold-hardinesse, such as the Iewes had, *Rom. 10. 2.* *Whose zeale was without knowledge.* And such as *Paul* had before his conuersion, *Phil. 3. vers. 6.* In zeale hee persecuted Gods Church: Knowledge therefore in Gods word, must bee the guide and conductor of our zeale.

III. point. The fruits of zeale must bee considered for the better discerning of true zeale. First, true zeale constraineth a man in every thing to seeke to please God: (a) *Whether wee be out of our wits,* (a) 2 Cor. 9. 23 14

was, we are it unto God: or whether we be in our right mind, we are it unto you. For the love of Christ constraineth us. So wherefore ever this true zeale is in any measure, it offereth violence to the hart; so as a man cannot but endeavour to doe his dutie; for the love he beareth vnto Christ. *Elihu* said, *The grace of God was in his heart as new wine in a vessell, which must needs vent out*, Job. 32. 18. 19. Secondly, true zeale makes a man endeavour to serue and please God with all his heart, power, and strength. So good king *Iosab* hearing the words of the Law read, hee turned not slackly or negligently, but with all his heart, and all his soule, and with all his might, according to all the law of *Moses*: so as like him was no King before, neither after him arose there any like him. Psal. 51. *David* humbling himselfe for his finnes, prayes for the pardon of them with such marvellous zeale as no tongue can vtter: *Desiring God to remember him according to the multitude of his mercies*, often repeating the same thing in diuers tearmes, that in some sort hee might expresse the earnest desire of his heart: And in giuing God thanks for his benefits, hee putteth all the strength of his heart thereto, crying out; *My soule praise thee O Lord, and all that is within mee*, Psalme 103. 1. And thus wee see what a thing it is to bee zealous; whence true zeale ariseth, and what it worketh in mans heart.

The Vse.

Seeing wee (as hath beene shewed) are tainted with this sinne of *Luke-warmnesse*, and coldnesse in Religion; let vs here learne how to redresse this vice. Wee must become zealous, hauing in our hart a feruent loue of true religion, and a vehement indignation when the same is disgraced, and false worship takes place. Let Religion therefore take place in our hearts; and let vs bee feruent and shew that same in our liues by zealous obedience. Away with all slacknesse & luke-warmnesse; it were better to be Iewes & Turks, and to hold no Religion, than to be luke-warme in the true profession. And thus much for zeale.

The second part of this remedie is, to *Repent*, or amend. This they are also enioyned, because zeale without repentance is nothing but rashnesse. *Ishmaels* zeale was no true zeale, because hee wanted repen-

tance, even then when hee was zealous. But wherefore was this church enioyned to repent? Namely, for *luke-warmnesse*; not for that she had committed any horrible sinne, but because shee was slacke in good duties.

Here then wee haue a good lesson for the ignorant sort, that challenge Gods mercie vnto themselves, because they are no notorious malefactors; as murderers, and adulterers, they hate no man, but do good vnto all: but here they are taught to reforme this their blindness and ignorance: For repentance must bee for want of good duties, yea for slacknesse therein: therefore let no man sooth himselfe in his ignorance, with a false persuasion that all is well if he liue not in grosse finnes. This is the enchauntment of the duell, whereby hee rockes many asleepe in their finnes, till he carrie their soules to hell: A good meaning will not serue the turne; God requires true zeale in well doing.

Vers. 20. *Behold I stand at the doore and knocke. If any man heare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in vnto him, and will suppe with him, and hee will mee.*

Here Christ, to keepe his Church from despaire, ministers vnto them the signes and tokens of his loue and fauour: and before the same sets downe this note of attention; *Behold*, hereby intending to make them more attentively to marke the tokens of his loue; that plainly seeing the same, they might not doubt thereof.

Hereby in generall wee are taught; that if wee would arme our selues against desperation, and distrust in any distresse, wee must both often and seriously consider and marke the tokens of Gods loue vnto vs; and that will fortifie our faith: Read Psalme 23. In every verse save the last, hee sets downe tokens of Gods loue and fauour towards him; and then in the last concludeth thus; *Without doubt, kindness & mercies shall follow mee all the dayes of my life; and I shall remaine a long season in the house of the Lord*. Our hearts are naturally fit-

led with doubting, which will bewray it ſelfe in any diſtreſſe. But to prevent and cut off all hurt that may come thereby, let vs marke the good dealing of our God towards vs; and obſerve the tokens of his loue and mercie in his ordinarie providence: and theſe will notably ſtrengthen vs againſt diſtruſt. And ſurely no perſon is ſo full of diſpaire, but if he could looke backe into the mercies of God, from the beginning of his dayes, and lay them to his heart, they would miniſter comfort vnto him in regard of his loue and fauour at that inſtant.

More particularly, Chriſt miniſtering comfort vnto this Church, doth expreſſe his meaning by a borrowed ſpeech, comparing euery man vnto a houſe, his heart vnto a doore, whereby entrance is made: and himſelfe vnto a gueſt or ſtranger deſiring to come and enter in, not ſo much to find courteſie, as to ſhew fauour and kindneſſe.

In the words of this verſe, there be two ſignes of his loue ſet downe. Firſt, a hearty deſire of their conuerſion, which hee earneſtly ſeeketh: Secondly, a promiſe of mutuall fellowſhip after their conuerſion. The firſt in theſe words; *Behold, I ſtand at the doore and knocke*: In this deſire Chriſt expreſſeth two things; Firſt, that this Church (if wee regard the greateſt part thereof) had no true fellowſhip with Chriſt, nor Chriſt with them; for he ſtands at the doore of their hearts, which were cloſed vp againſt him. This may ſeeme ſtrange, but the caſe is euident: for though they had in them many good things; as knowledge of Gods will, and did profeſſe the Goſpell, and were partakers of the ſignes and ſeales of the Couenant of grace; yet they were tainted with this notorious ſinne of *lukewarmeſſe*, which cloſed vp the doore of their heart againſt Chriſt, and barred him out.

Here then we are carefully to obſerue, that a man may haue in him many good things, and yet by living in one ſinne, bee quite cut off from all true fellowſhip with Chriſt. *Iudas* had many excellent gifts: he forſooke all & followed Chriſt, he preached the goſpel, and adminiſtered the Sacraments; & yet by couetouſneſſe the doore of his heart was quite barred againſt Chriſt. So *Herode* reuerenced

Iohn, and heard him gladly; and did many things at his inſtruction, Mark 6. 20. yet by the ſinne of inceſt, his heart was ſo cloſed, that he had no fellowſhip with Chriſt. And ſo it is with vs: It is good that wee know the will of God; and approve the ſame, and profeſſe the goſpell, and alſo receiue the ſeales of the Couenant: But yet for all theſe, our caſe may bee ſuch, as wee ſhall haue no true fellowſhip with Chriſt. For if wee nourish, though but one ſinne, and liue therein, that will make a ſeperation betwene Chriſt and vs, bee the ſinne what it will; as couetouſneſſe, adulterie, prophaneſſe, or ſuch like. Hereby then, all that deſire to haue true fellowſhippe with Chriſt, are to bee warned to purge their liues from all ſinne, ſo as their hearts bee not tainted with nourishing any one ſinne: for euen one ſinne whatſoeuer it bee, is a ſtrong barre, that will keepe Chriſt from coming into vs.

Secondly, whereas he ſaith, *I haue ſtood*

at the doore: (for ſo the words are) Here he ſpeaketh to this Church, as he vſed to ſpeake by his old Prophets. As by *Ieremie*, (a) *I haue ſent vnto you all my Prophets,* (a) *Ier. 7. 25*
riſing early every day and ſending them. And by *Eſay*, (b) *haue ſpread out my hands at the* (b) *Iſay 65. 2.*
day vnto a rebellious people, which walked in a way that was not good; euen after their owne imagination. So here, *I haue ſtood at the doore*; That is, long, euen till night; as the word ſuppeth importeth.

Hereby Chriſt would ſignifie his great patience, in waiting for the conuerſion of this people of *Laodicea*. In iuſtice hee might long agoone haue caſt them to the pit of deſtruction for their ſinnes, and yet in mercie hee waiteth for their conuerſion; and complaineth that he hath waited long. Here then wee haue juſt occaſion to take a view of Gods patience in waiting for the conuerſion of a ſinner. And that which hee ſaith to this Church, hee may as iuſtly ſay vnto vs; for hee hath ſtood verie long at our doores, euen 36. yeares and vpward, and yet ſtill continueth knocking, ſo as he may iuſtly complaine of his long waiting. Let vs then here learne to know the day of our viſitation, which is then to any people when Chriſt ſtands at their doores and knockes,

knocks; and vnto vs this day is present: Wee haue the ministerie of the Gospells; and therefore we must be perswaded, that this is the time of our visitation, & hereupon learne the dutie which Christ teacheth the Iewes: namely, *acknowledge the day of our visitation*; which if wee do not, we must looke for like vengeance which fell vpon the Iewes, because they regarded not when God sent his owne Sonne from his bosome to knocke at the doore of their hearts.

And knocke. Here is a further signification of his desire of their conuersion: wherein we may behold his great & vnspeakable mercie towards this Church, and in them towards all other his children. This Church had bard out Christ by their sinnes: and yet he pursues them, he *knocks*; he vseth meanes to enter for their good, and vouchsafes them mercie, even then when they refuse it. Thus when Adam had sinned & fled, and hid himselfe, did the Lord seeke him in the garden, & make with him the covenant of grace. And therefore it is truly said in

(c) *1sq. 45. 1.* (a) *If say, The Lord is found of them that neuer sought him.* Lu. 15. 4. 5, *Christ fetcheth the lost sinner that was gone astray.* Al which shew and set out vnto vs, the vnspeakable greatnesse of Gods mercie in Christ vnto miserable man, who then shewes mercie vnto him when he neuer seeketh it. This his mercie is verified in all Churches, & vnto vs; Which must bee an occasion to enlarge & stirre vp our harts to blesse the name of Christ for this vnspeakable mercy, in vouchsafing vs fauor when we neuer sought it, but refused it.

Quest. How doth Christ knocke?

Ans. The words going before, whereunto these haue reference, giue light vnto this Question. Before Christ had threatened this Church, *even to shew her out of his mouth for her lukewarmnesse*; and after he counsels her to *buy of him gold, and other remedies*. Now, vpon this greivous threatening, the church might despaire of his mercie: But Christ to comfort her, tels her here, that these reproofes and rebukes, were but knockings at the doores of their hearts to make them open: For then Christ knocketh at the harts of any people, when he vouchsafes them means to see their sinnes, and threatens them for the same; and withall giues them counsel

whereby they may escape the fearful punishments thereby deserued.

Here then note the state of any people that haue the ministerie of the Gospell vouchsafed vnto them; they haue Christ among them, standing at the doore of their hearts, and knocking to come in, by exhortations, admonitions, threatnings, and by promises, which is a great and endlesse mercie.

First, seeing wee haue Christ knocking *The Vse.* at our doores, there ought not to be in vs such dulnesse and deadnesse of heart in hearing him knocke. If a man of any account come and knocke at the dore of our house; oh what a stirre will we make to let him in quickly! What a shame then is it, that we should be dead-harted when Christ Iesus the king of heauen knockes at the doore of our hearts? Secondly, this must admonish vs with all speed to turne vnto God by true repentance, for wee know not how long hee will continue knocking; and if wee doe not heare and turne before hee withdraw himselfe from vs, wee perish eternally: For if we refuse when he knocketh at the doore of our harts, he wil refuse when we knock at the doore of his mercie, *Pror. I. 25. 26. Mat. 25. 11. 12.*

Note further, this knocking is not ordinarie, but it is ioyned with crying: For he saith, *If he beare my voyce*, so that hee both knockes and cries. It is then the knocking of one that would enter: wee therefore ought answerably, with serious regard to receiue the threatnings of the law and the promises of grace, and so bee as earnest in receiuing & embracing him, as he is in knocking to come into vs.

The second token of Christs loue, is a gracious promise of fellowship with them, in these words: *If any man beare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in vnto him, and will suppe with him, and he with mee.* These words haue beene much abused: and therefore I will stand to set downe the true vse and meaning of the same. Marke, the forme of speech is such, as giues vnto a mans will and soule an action in his conuersion, whereby hee comes to Christ and receiues Christ.

This may seeme strange, but it is for iust cause vied by the holy Ghost, for in the conuersion of a sinner, there be three workers, the holy Ghost, the word, and mans

mans will. The holy Ghost is the principall Agent inlightning the mind with true knowledge, softning the heart, and changing the will from euill to good. The word is the instrument of the holy Ghost; for now he worketh not by reuelation or speciall instinct; but ordinarily in and by the word, when a man is reading, hearing, or meditating, either publicly, or priuately: for the Word preached is the power of God to mans saluation from faith to faith. Thirdly, mans will, though by nature it be euil and dead vnto grace, yet being renewed by the holy Ghost, in the first act of conuersion mooueth and strueth to be turned. It is not like a peece of waxe onely passiue, which without any action receiueth impression: But as fire, so soone as it is fire doth burne; and so soone as it burneth it is fire: so the will, though by nature it mooue not, yet being renewed by grace it mooueth, and so soone as it mooueth it is renewed. And hereupon it is, that the holy Ghost ascribeth action vnto a sinner, that is to be conuerted: which argueth not, that by themselves men can haue a will to be conuerted, but that being renewed, they may will their conuersion. And for this cause is the Gospell preached in these tearmes, *Repent and beleue*: not to shew that man by nature can repent or beleue; but that God in mans conuersion, doth giue him grace to will and desire the same.

Hence then it followes, that this text hath bene diuers waies abused: First, by the Papists, who hence would gather *free will of conuersion in a sinner by nature*. True it is, a man hath free will in his conuersion; yet not by nature, but by grace, neither can any more be gathered hence, for here it is onely said, *If any man heare and open when I knocke*. Nay, hence wee may rather gather, that a man by nature cannot heare, nor open, because the counsell is giuen to such as are poore, and blind, and naked by nature.

Secondly, they also abuse this text, that hereby would proue a *flexible free will* by grace to be in man, which is this: Sundry men thinke, that after the fall of *Adam*, all being wrapt vp in sinne, God gaue a generall grace, whereby any man might will, and receiue that which is good: and this grace, though it dispose the will in

some part to that which is good; yet it takes not the corruption away, but that remaines still; whereupon if he will, hee may receiue Christ by that general grace: or if he will not, he may refuse Christ by his naturall corruption which yet remaineth in him. It is said, this may be gathered from this text: But the truth is, here is no foundation for *flexible free will*: all that can here bee gathered is, that man hath free will in his conuersion, yet not by a generall, but by Gods special grace. Nay, Christs ministry serues for this end, that those which before could not turne of themselves, might by grace bee conuerted. This flexible grace is against Gods word: Christ saith, *(a) Euerie one that hath heard, & hath learned of the Father cometh vnto me*; He saith not, may come if hee will, but peremptorily *cometh*: For mans will cannot dispose and ouerrule the work of God; but the work of God ouerrules the wil of man: though man be vnwilling, yet when God calleth effectually he cannot but come: For the creature cannot reiect or resist the will and calling of his creator.

If any man open vnto mee, I will come, &c. The proper intent of Christ in this conditional promise, is to prouoke them that be dull and heavy, to listen diligently to Christs words, & to receiue the doctrine of saluation from him gladly.

In the example of this Church we are taught our dutie. Seeing Christ in the minsterie of his word knocks both by threatnings, by promises, & good counsell: therefore we must all of vs listen vnto the words of Christ, & open the doors of our hearts, and receiue him into the same. But alas the practise of the world is farre otherwise: men are churlish Nabals vnto Christ, who though hee come friendly, yet they repell him; making no account of such a guest. Nay, wee are Bethlemites, which haue no roome for Christ in the Innes of our harts, if Christ will needs lodge with vs, hee must lye among the beasts in the filthy stable. Nay, many send him out of their gates with the Iewes, and crucifie him with their finnes. But let vs abandon this greuous sinne, for it is the right way to plunge our soules into the pit of destruction.

Quest. How must a man open his hart to receiue Christ? *Ans.* By doing two things.

N.B.

(a) Ioh. 6. 45.

things. First, hee must labour to see his owne vilenesse; that hee is vnworthy to receiue so blessed a Guest, then hee must humble himselfe, and acknowledge this his vnworthinesse. Even as the ruler did when he said vnto Christ; *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roofe*; Mat. 8. 8. This humiliation is the beginning of grace. This done, hee must by true faith lay hold on Christ; that is, beleeue that Christs death and passion is for the pardon of his sins; and for the saluation of his soule: For as Christ dwels in mens hearts by faith, so by faith he must be receiued into their hearts. Here some will say, if this be to receiue Christ, then all is well. But take heede thou deceiue not thy selfe with a vaine imagination of thine owne brain in stead of faith. Looke therefore that thy faith be true & sound: if it be true faith, it will worke by loue, euen a true loue of Christ and his members, which will appeare by keeping his Commaundements. Ioh. 14. 23.

I will come in vnto him, and sup with him, and hee shall sup with me. Here is the thing promised; to wit, mutuall communion and fellowship with Christ. This is the principal token of Christs loue, being indeed the verie ground of all true happinesse, ioy, and comfort: and therefore it is added to moue them to *open* vnto Christ. This societie, is here propounded in two parts. First, the sinner being conuerted, makes a feast vnto Christ; *I will come in vnto him, and sup with him.* Secondly, Christ makes a feast vnto him; *And hee shall sup with me.* And in these two consists the sum of *Salomons* song of songs; where Christ entertaineth the Church, and the Church againe feasts Christ.

For the first, some may aske, how can a poore sinner make a feast for Christ? *Answ.* Cantic. 4. 16. The Church or euerie Christians soule, calleth Christ vnto a feast *in his Garden to eat his pleasant things.* This Feast consisteth of these things. First, of the fruits of true repentance. Psal. 51. 17. *A broken and contrite heart, is a daintie dish acceptable vnto God.* Secondly, of an heart beleeuing the word and promises of God, for without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11. 6. Thirdly, the penitent sinner must (a)

(a) Rom. 12. 1

give up himselfe in soule and body, a holy & acceptable sacrifice vnto God, by seruing

God faithfully, not only in the duties of piety, but also in the faithful performance of the duties of his particular calling: these be the delightfull dishes wherewith Christ is fed.

The second feast is made by Christ, & *hee shall sup with me.* Christ comes not to be entertained onely, but to entertaine: And the feast which he makes is his own bodie and blood: (b) *For his flesh is meat* (b) Ioh. 6. 55. *indeed, and his blood is drinke indeed.* The vessels wherewith these meats are carried, are the *Word* and *Sacraments*. And all that bee his welcome guests, are true penitent sinners, which haue hungering and thirsting hearts after his bodie and blood. Luk. 11. 13. And from this feast arise these blessings: (c) *Rigorousness, peace* (c) Rom. 14. 17. *of conscience, and unity in the holy Ghost.*

Setting this fellowship with Christ is here promised to *those that open & receive him into their hearts*: First, hereby we are taught to renounce all earthly and carnal pleasures; and not to addict our selues to drinking and quaffing or sumptuous fares; for here is a better feast set before vs, whereupon wee must set our hearts, turning our eyes from al worldly pleasures. We know by experience how friends entertaine each other; but wee must labor to know how to entertaine Christ, and to feast him with his owne graces, that hee may sup with vs, and we with him, and so haue true fellowship with him.

Againe, by this we may see a notable abuse of many that come to the Lords table: for here wee see is required an interchange of feasting, betweene Christ and a Christian: but many there be that will come to the Lords table, and feast with Christ, that will neuer feast Christ againe: And yet we ought to be as careful to feast him, as to feast with him. It is a shame to sup often with Christ, and yet like vngrateful *Nabals*, neuer to haue one good dish of grace, and holly obedience to set before him, wherewith indeed wee should feast him daily. Others will seem to giue him good entertainment, for that day whereon they feast with Christ; but soone after they giue him gal to eate, and vineger to drinke, by their daily sins.

Vers. 21. *To him that overcometh will I make to sit with me in my throne, as I*

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overcome, and sit with my father in his throne.

Verf. 22. *Let him that hath an ear, hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle, and hath two parts: A Promise, *verf. 21.* and a Commandement, *verf. 22.* In the Promise, note two things. First, to whom it is made, *To him that overcometh.* Hereof we have spoken. Secondly, the thing promised; that is, fellowship with Christ in glorie: *I will make to sit &c.* whereby is not meant equality of glorie and honor; for that is not possible for any creature to receive. But a participation only of some part of his glorie: so much as shall suffice for his perfect happiness. And because it might be thought

no great matter; therefore it is illustrated by a comparison, *as I overcame, and sit with my father in his throne.* As if hee should say; I will advance them, that overcome their spirituall enemies, into the participation of my glorie, even as my Father (when I had overcome) advanced me into the fellowship of his glorie. Now Christ as he is Mediator, is inferiour to his father, and in that regard is not advanced to equall glorie with his Father, though he sit with him: So the members of Christ, being inferiour vnto him, may sit with him in his throne, though their glorie be unequal. These things for substance have beene handled. Chap. 2. verf.

25. 28. The second part of this conclusion, *Let him that hath an ear, hear, &c.* hath also beene handled before.

The fruit of the righteous, is as a tree of life:

And he that winneth foules, is wise: Prov. 11. 30.

FINIS.

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